Issue 116 ■ September ■ 1997 ■ £4.99

AMIGA COMPUTING



Web Awards

Amiga Computing rounds-up reviews and rates every essential Amiga Web site on the Internet

IDG MEDIA
09
9 770959 963091

PPaint 7.1 ● Javascript ● Art Effect 2 ● Picasso IV vs CyberVision 3D

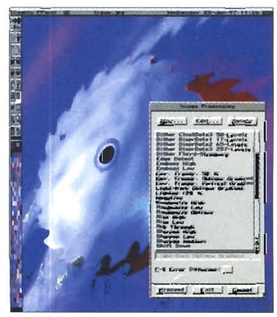
Contents

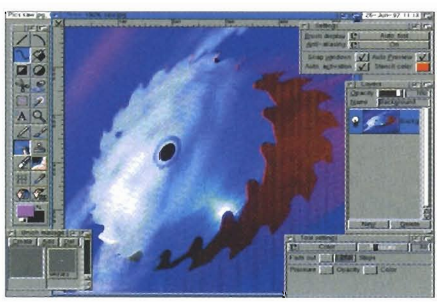
Amiga Action



Reviews



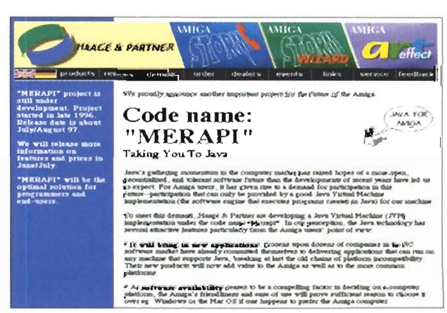






Features

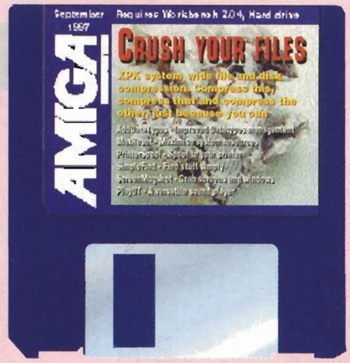




THE COVERDISK

CRUSH YOUR FILES

Using this months main program you will have system wide file and disk compression



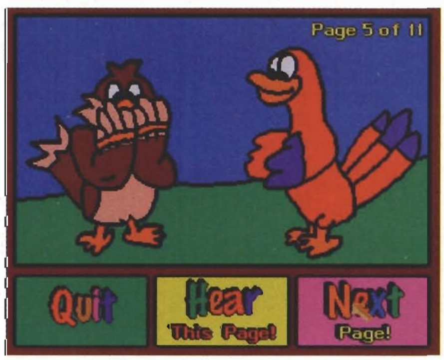
Includes:

AddDataTypes – Improved Datatype management
MaxReset – Maximise system resources
PrinterSpool – Spool files to your printer
Simple Find – Find files quickly and simply
ScreenMugShot – Grab screens and windows
PlayDT – A flexible Datatype sound player

COVER STORY

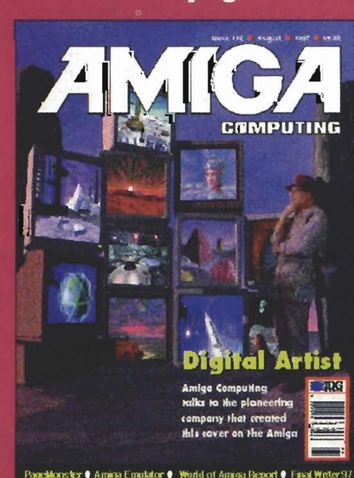


REGULARS



BACK ISSUES

Missed out on an issue of Amiga Computing?
Turn to page 30



AMIGA GUIDE

amiga comment

PCs, pah

Neil's been on the gin again, and this time he's steaming mad

After having my PC Siamesed to my trusty A1200 for the last six months, I have started to wonder what exactly is it that makes the Amiga so special. If you read the letters page this month or if you are on the Internet, you always find one or two people that spring up shouting "Face it, the Amiga is dead, PCs are so much better".

Why should anyone think a PC is so much better? Let's start with sound – a basic Amiga is equipped with four channel eight bit sound; 12+ year old technology. The PC should, with its cutting edge 16 bit sound cards, stomp all over my A1200. Fact is, I have yet to hear the AWE 32 sound card produce anything better than my A1200.

PC Midi tunes sound awful, like some sort of bastardised lift muzac, and game samples are generally (read always) sampled at 11KHz. Plus the Amiga now has the AHI (come on Amiga Int. this has to go in the OS), so even a plain old A1200/600/500 can have infinite channels at 14 bit quality, CPU power dependant and the Amiga can support any new sound card made for it. I say, PC no advantage.

Processor power – this is a none argument. True, the 680x0 series is dead and even the 060 is years out of date, but once the OS is made processor independent this will be irrelevant. DEC Alphas easily out perform Intel CPUs and PowerPC chips are far cheaper than either, just choose the one that suits your needs – 'nuf said I think.

Graphics – I think this is a case of if we can't beat them, join them. Just to get this out the way the **only** advantage Windows has is that from the start it had RTG. A better way of putting this is that from the start the Amiga OS has been disadvantaged by being so closely tied to its custom hardware. What was an advantage so many years ago is now an unbearable burden. But this change from a closed to open OS design is something to be welcomed with open arms as it gives **you** more choice. If you want a top of the range big budget card, go for it. If you are happy with the standard display card, keep it. And then of course there is the 3-D acceleration of the new display chips, provided by plug in drivers.

So what is left? Hard drives – we will use any size of SCSI or EIDE drives thank you very much. CD-Roms – hopefully the next OS will automatically recognise and mount any attached SCSI or EIDE CD-Rom.

So far it's pretty even I think. OK so the Amiga OS is a little lagging behind, but what do you expect after years of neglect, tiny development teams and small budgets, while Windows has had the complete opposite thrown at it?

However, there is a real killer that Windows can never escape. The Amiga OS was developed to run on the 68000 processor and the core of the OS has never changed. Even if you accept that a PowerPC port may result in it having to be written in C, this will only reduce the performance by three, but there is no reason for it not to be written in PowerPC assembler – the return will be worth the effort. While the core of Windows was developed on fast 486 and Pentium systems.

So what?. Well, the Amiga OS and GUI were written to be responsive running on a processor that can't even deliver 1 MIP. Windows was developed on systems that produce at least 30 times that power and was made to be responsive at that level of power.

I have an 060 Amiga and, even with AGA, I am never left waiting around, unlike with my 200MHz PC. A fully native PowerPC Amiga is going to blow your socks off.

Neil Mohr
Editor

The *AC* team

EDITOR Neil Mohr
ART EDITOR Graham Parry
PRODUCTION EDITOR Justine Bowden
NEWS EDITOR Hugh Poynton
REGULAR CONTRIBUTORS Dave Cusick, Katherine Nelson, Paul Overaa
ADVERTISING MANAGER Elaine Prescott
AD SALES Sue Horsefield
AD PRODUCTION Barbara Newall
AD TYPESETTERS Malcolm Thorley, Eddie Burke

MARKETING MANAGER Steve Tagger
PRODUCTION MANAGER Alan Capper
ADMIN MANAGER Joanne Clifford
CIRCULATION DIRECTOR David Wren
MANAGING DIRECTOR Ian Bloomfield
DISTRIBUTION COMAG (01895) 444055
SUBSCRIPTION 0151-357 2961

Published by IDG Media, Media House, Adlington Park, Macclesfield SK10 4NP

Tel: 01625 878888, Fax: 01625 879966
EMail contacts:
Editorial: edit@acomp.demon.co.uk
Advertising: ads@acomp.demon.co.uk
http://www.idg.co.uk/amigacomp/

12 issue subscription £49.99 (UK), £69.99 (EEC) £84.99 (World)
Ongoing quarterly direct debit: £10.99 (UK only)

Printed by Spottiswoode, Colchester, Essex

IDG MEDIA

US Readers – Amiga Computing (ISSN 0959-9630) is published monthly by IDG Media, England, a subsidiary of the IDG Corp. Periodical postage paid pending at Boston, MA and additional mailing offices. **Send enquiries to:** IDG Macclesfield.

US yearly subscription rate: USA Gold $70, USA Standard $40

For nine years Amiga Computing has been the leading magazine for Amiga enthusiasts. Amiga Computing promises to inform, educate and entertain its readers each month with the most dedicated coverage of the Amiga available

By Hugh Poynton

OFFICIAL AMIGA "CLONE"

MicroniK Computers surprised the Amiga community this week by announcing that it was launching the first official Amiga clone since the Gateway buyout.

The MicroniK Infinitiv, although based on the A1200 chassis, will be housed in a special snap-and-click tower case enabling the user to easily upgrade the machine.

Three models will be available. The Infinitiv A1500 will boast the A1200 motherboard, bus board Zorro II/III, five Zorro slots, one PC-ISA slot, two PC-PCI slots, one video slot, one SCSI-2 controller and one CPU slot (A3000/4000 32 bit).

The next model down, the Infinitiv A1400 will offer five Zorro slots, two PC-ISAS slots, 2 PC-PCI slots and one video slot. The most basic model, the A1300 will come without the bus board but will allow quite easy upgrades.

For more information call MicroniK on +49 (0) 2171 72 45 0 or visit their Web site at http://www.micronik.de/



GATEWAY HEAD MENTIONS AMIGA

In a recent interview with Boot magazine, Gateway president Ted Waittes revealed the company's motivation for purchasing the Amiga. According to Waittes, "Amiga has some fantastic technology. It's extremely efficient and there's the tremendous enthusiasm of folks in the Amiga user environment. The core technology is very compelling. I like the modularization of the platform and the operating system, the efficiency of the operating system, the pureness and cleanliness of the environment, the video technology... there are a lot of good things."

The Gateway president went on to dispel the notion of an Amiga curse and reassured Amiga users that the company wasn't just purchased for the patents.

EYETECH LAUNCHES INTERFACES AND ACCESSORIES

Eyetech has just launched a new range of interfaces and accessories that should make life easier for those wanting to build their own A1200 tower systems. Currently, if you want to build your own A1200 tower you've got to use either an adapted case or carry out a DIY conversion using PC peripherals. This can cause considerable difficulties as there are intrinsic differences between A1200 and PC peripherals.

The new Eyetech range promises to make the task less stressful. The EZ Key adapter plugs into the A1200 motherboard's existing ribbon connector on to a hard drive or floppy drive power connector. Once this is done any Amiga or PC keyboard will be automatically detected by the interface's five pin DIN connector.



Eyetech has also developed an EIDE buffered hard drive interface which will be compatible with virtually all accelerators, hard drives and ATAPI CD-Roms, allowing a total of four hard drives, CD-Roms or cartridge drives. In addition, floppy drive and parallel port interfaces are available.

All the Eyetech products will fit into the tower shield without modification. For more information phone Eyetech on 0164 271 3185

FASTEST EVER ACCELERATOR

Eyetech Group Limited has announced that it is to start shipping the latest 68X processor. The 68060 processor will run at 66MHz and has a performance rating of over 51 Mips (Millions of Instructions Per Second) making it the fastest 68x accelerator yet. It comes with an associated install disk which puts all the 060 libraries in place and an MCP installer.

For more information phone Eyetech on 0164 271 3185

ALADDIN 4D

Nova Design Inc. has begun shipping the latest version of its successful Aladdin 4D package. Aladdin 4D 5.0 will include a host of new features including advanced tools for modelling volumetric gases and particle systems and features such as a new AmigaDOS 2.1/3.1 style interface, and support for all Amiga display modes.

Nova Design is also offering ImageFX for Aladdin owners. Those updating Aladdin to v5.o will be able to purchase ImageFX2.6 for $124.95.

For more information call 804-282-5868 or fax (804) 282-3768.

NEW AT HIQ

HiQ has announced that its Siamese System now supports Alpha based WindowsNT workstations. The system uses a Windows95/NT PC in conjuncture with an 020+ Amiga. HiQ supplies software which enables the Siamese system to use one monitor, mouse, keyboard and printer. The Siamese RTG allows the user to re-target Amiga screens to the Windows desktop in resolutions up to 2048x2948.

In addition, HiQ has revealed it is in the final testing stage of the Siamese TCP/IP Ethernet/Internet connection. Now Siamese Systems will support the TCP/IP protocol for transferring all file data, Screen Re-targetting and other Siamese Systems.

The Ethernet link will allow any Win95/NT system to run the Siamese System software from an Amiga as long as they are both linked via Ethernet and have TCP/IP stacks available. So far tests have shown file transfer rates of over 500Kbytes/sec on budget Ethernet cards and the Siamese RTG system positively flies.

For more information on Siamese Systems take a look at the HiQ Web site at http://www.siamese.co.uk/ or for more info on Alpha http://www.alpha.digital.com/

news snippets

NETCOM OFFERS X2 TECHNOLOGY

NETCOM, the world's largest independent ISP has upgraded its modem technology to x2 standard. The new x2 technology means that NETCOM customers can have a connection speed of 56kbps – the fastest currently available.

In conjuncture with this, US Robotics, makers of the x2 modem technology has decided to start incorporating the x2 technology in all its future modems. A deal has been agreed between NETCOM and US Robotics so that the ISP can offer the USR Sportster Flash modem to its customers for a special price of £146.38 excluding VAT.

According to Roy Lee, NETCOM's product marketing manager, 'NETCOM took a decisive technological lead by supporting US Robotics in its development of x2 modem access. "Now that the technology is available, we aim to ensure that our customers take advantage of it as quickly and efficiently as possible."

According to market analysts, Apple Computer's stock has dropped to a new all time low. June saw Apple's shares second consecutive 12 year low, the result of a key clone makers decision to start shipping PC compatibles. Power Computing's Securities and Exchange Commission recently announced its intention to enter the Intel chip based personal computer market.

Power Computing's decision further weakens Apples corporate position – at the moment Apple's share of the personal computing market is low as 5 per cent.

CRAZY KEY RINGS!

Bandai, the Japanese toy maker, is to launch a series of computer games aimed at twenty and thirty somethings. The key ring mounted games are all recreations of the simple but addictive games most people can remember first playing on a Spectrum or Vic.

Tetris Jr. will be Bandai's first release and will feature a shrunken down version of the simple yet addictive '80s classic Tetris. Following this, Bandai will be releasing Space Invaders and Block Breaker (a breakout clone).

All three games will be available from toy stores and will cost about £7.99 each.

PETRO TYSCHTSCHENKO REASSURES AUSTRALIAN AMIGA USERS



Petro Tyschtschenko, head of Amiga International, revealed something of the Amiga's long term future in his speech to the Australian Amiga Gathering '97. Although much of the address reiterated what had been said at the recent London and Atlanta Amiga shows, there were a few new revelations.

Tyschtschenko highlighted the three basic elements of Amiga's future corporate strategy. Gateway and Amiga will work to support the existing Amiga community, levering the existing Amiga technology through broad licensing and assist in the development of new products for the home computer and video/graphics market.

He told the gathering that Amiga was currently identifying candidates to manage Amiga's R&D department and how best to run any future research efforts. He also stated that Amiga was interested in working with companies such as Phase 5 to develop one unified Amiga standard. The Amiga International president used the speech to reveal the companies short term plans, discussing in some detail the recent Micronik licensing agreement.

A transcript of the speech is available on the Amiga Web Directory at http://www.cucug.org:/atnews.html

AMIGAZONE EXPANDS

AmigaZone, the long running Amiga Web site and ISP, has just introduced a host of new features and special offers. The site which was founded in 1985 by Harv Laser has introduced a $19.95 per month membership fee which enables you access to everything on the site.

The site carries all the Amiga Usenet Newsgroups and message bases for Amiga-oriented mailing lists. The lists can be read on-line via AmigaZone's text-style BBS interface or with your chosen browser in our Web interface. The Web site has also just introduced an on-line image thumbnail maker which allows you to view images without having to download them first.

In addition, AmigaZone is running weekly contests held on Sunday nights in which you can win software and hardware. The monthly fee of $19.95 gives you your own Amigazone e-mail address, a text style BBS interface, Web browser interface, access to the Amigazone private FTP site and POP server.

Included in the fee is a full CalWeb UNIX shell account with all the standard UNIX shell tools for e-mail and news and 10Mb of free storage for your own Web site should you want to build one. For more information call AmigaZone on 1-800-509-9322

DUTCH RIVAL PLANS COMMODORE TAKE-OVER

Tulip Computers, the Amsterdam based computer manufacturer, has announced that it is in negotiations to take over Commodore. Tulip Computers, already on of Europe's largest computer manufacturers said that the planned take-over would boost its earnings per share, push its annual revenue over 1 billion guilders ($515 million) and might well be financed by a $15.4 million share issue.

Under the take-over agreement Tulip and Commodore would retain their own brand names and focus on different parts of the computer market. Tulip would continue to aim at the professional market whilst Commodore would concentrate on selling to small businesses and the home market.

After going bankrupt in 1994, Commodore company has been concentrating on retailing PC clones.

MR HARDWARE LAUNCHES RETAIL ESCORT V4.1

The New York based Amiga software developers, Mr Hardware Computers, announced that a demo of their forthcoming Retail Escort v4.1 will be made available on the Aminet.

Retail Escort is a professional business management tool for the Amiga and is designed to be as intuitive and easy to use as possible. The system includes features which can handle Accounts Receivable, Accounts Payable, Business Reports, Checking Accounts, Credit Cards, Invoicing, Inventory Control, Order Tracking, Price Quotes, Label Printing and Mail Lists.

The demo will be posted on the Aminet under the name of RE41DEMO.

news snippets

1997 - GOOD YEAR FOR DEMON

Demon Internet, the largest European ISP, has announced that it has topped the 100,000 mark in the first few months of 1997. According to a recent press release, Demon Internet now hosts more Web sites in the UK than any other ISP. The Web server now hosts 2,500 commercial Web sites and 20,000 sites as part of Demon Internet's homepage service.

Demon plans to develop services to suit the non-technical/first time user market so that by the year 2000, a million customers will be using the ISP.

BTA 'WEIRD' WEBSITE AWARD

The British Tourist Authority has announced a new competition to find the most unusual representation of its Web site. The most unusual representation will win £1,500 of computer equipment and the entry will be reproduced as a promotional postcard for the Web site.

Apparently, the competition organisers are looking for a striking way to reproduce the Web address in an unusual medium. "A school might create the address using all of its pupils and taking an aerial shot of themselves, for example we've even been approached by a chap who does sky writing to paint it in the sky" said BTA spokesperson Laurence Bresh.

Anybody interested should contact Sara Stewart at The Wright Partnership on 0181 742 7800.

NEW SERGE PROTECTOR

Jo Jo UK Ltd has announced the launched of its latest surge and spike protector. Surges and spikes – irregularities in the electrical power supply – can cause vital data to be lost from affected computers.

Called Surge & Spike, the protectors are built into extension sockets and offer 13 amp capacity.

For more information call Jo Jo on 01933 675333.

Extracting Cover Disk Files

Before putting the cover disks anywhere near your computer, write protect them by moving the black tab in the top corner of the disk, so you can see through the hole. Doing this makes sure you cannot damage your disks in any way. There is also no reason why the cover disks need to be written to, so even if the computer asks you to write enable the disks, don't do it.

To extract any single archive, simply double click its icon, and follow the on screen instructions. If you want to extract the program to Ram, select the NOVICE level on the welcome screen, and press proceed once on the current screen, and then again on the next. The program can then be found in your Ram disk. Normally most programs need further installing, so read the documents on how to do this.

Hard Drive Users

Hard drive users do not have to boot with the first disk, but you must make sure you have the Amiga's *Installer* program in your C drawer. To make sure your hard drive has the correct files in place double click on the SetupHD icon. This will check if you have the Installer program and if not will copy it across. Do not worry as it will not write over any existing files.

All you hard drive owners will find MultiExtract very useful. It is a separate method of extracting the cover disk files. It allows you to extract a number of files in one go, to your hard disk or Ram.

When you run MultiExtract, you will be presented with a number of check boxes, each representing one of the programs on that cover disk. Just de-select all the programs you do not want extracting, and then press proceed. All the selected programs can now miraculously be found in the selected destination.

Faulty Disks

If you should find your Amiga Computing CoverDisk damaged or faulty, please return it to:

TIB Plc, TIB House, 11 Edward Street, Bradford, W. Yorks BD4 7BH.

Please allow 28 days for delivery

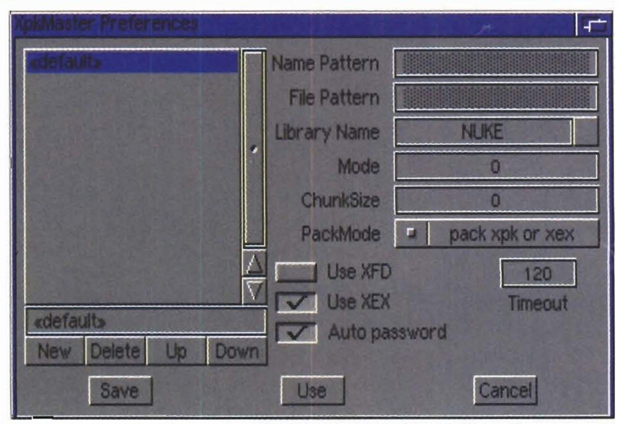


I'm crushing your files. XPK will provide you with simple file and disk compression that can be used by any program taking advantage of the XPK system

XPK

Author: Bryan Ford/Urban Muller Requires Workbench 2.04

This is the latest release of the long running Amiga compression system XPK. For anyone not familiar with it, the XPK system is a group of Amiga run time libraries designed to gives programmers easy access to many different compression routines.



Now and again someone comes up with a really good idea, XPK is one of them

So what you may ask. Well for you it means that you can store many files compressed with the safe knowledge that many different programs will be able to read them, no matter which XPK compression routines you use.

Even if programs do not directly support XPK there are a number of programs out there that add compression and decompression patches to the Amiga's OS allowing all programs to support XPK. These have appeared on past coverdisks and will still work with this latest release.

The good thing about XPK is that all the compressor routines are contained in Amiga libraries, this makes the whole thing very modular. New compression schemes can be added or updated at any time. Initially there were only a number of standard compression routines available that gave similar results to PowerPacker or LHA, but later a number of specialised libraries appeared for compressing sound data. These gave much better results when compressing sample or tracker modules.

Just use the installer that comes with the package and everything will be copied over to your machine. For more details on programs that support XPK read the Amiga guide documentation.

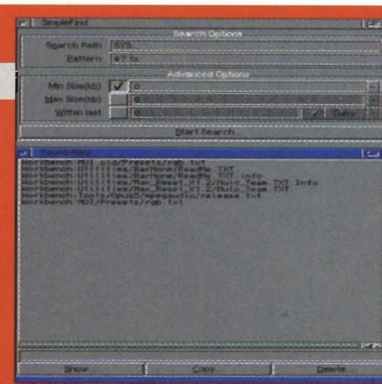
SIMPLE FIND

Author:Sebastian Bauer ● Requires Workbench 3.0

It has to be said that our Hugh is a bit of a male bimbo. This means that the little air head is always misplacing things, particularly files on his computer, and once you have lost something on your computer you can spend ages digging through all those directories, and there is always a chance that you could miss what you are looking for.

Now one thing the Mac has is a really well thought out find utility and this Amiga find program provides features that are very similar. In addition to being able to supply the standard search path and pattern, you can add minimum and maximum file sizes to look for as well as dates.

To make adding paths easier the ASL file requester is employed and normal Amiga wildcards can be used for the file name. The search will produce a new window with a list of all the found files. From this you can copy, delete or view files. The view program can be changed but generally it is best if you leave this as MultiView for maximum flexibility. All very handy.

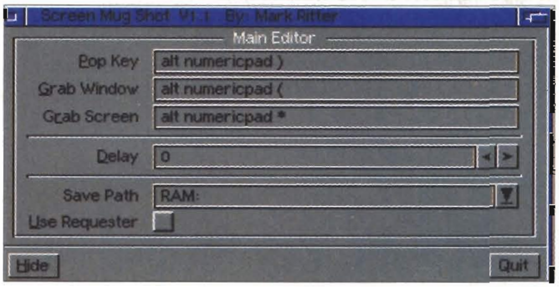


99, 100, coming ready or not. Finding stuff is a doddle

SCREEN MUGSHOT

Author: Mark Ritter
Requires Workbench 3.0

One thing we have to do a lot here at Amiga Computing is get screenshots. We have a dedicated grabber for games, while for utilities we use the ancient Quickgrab. One problem though is often we want to grab just a window and Screen Mugshot will do just that, it is an up to date screen and window grabbing commodity.



After you have installed the program and run it for the first time it will complain about having no preferences but click on continue and run exchange you will be able to pop up the interface and save off new preferences – or you can press the alt and) on the numeric keypad to get the same effect.

BOOB OF THE MONTH

Well blow me, I tried my best. I named an icon wrong but still I managed to catch the mistake before it was too late. So unfortunately there are no mistakes this month, even though saying that is obviously tempting fate. So just in case you have trouble extracting PrintSpooler, the reason is it should be called PrinterSpooler. So if it isn't, rename the icon.

MAX RESET

Author: Massimo Ciccio
Requires Workbench 2.04

Max Reset is a tiny little program that can do an awful lot of good for your computer. Quite simply it allows you to get the most memory possible for your machine.

Once you have extracted the archive you have to use the installer that comes with the program, as the program is part of the install file. The installer will copy all the files to their correct destination and, once done, there is a single file to run MaxReset.

Just run the new MaxReset program and you can reboot your machine with the maximum amount of memory available.

PRINTERSPOOLER

Author: Mark Ritler
Requires Workbench 3.0

This is not a print spooler in the traditional sense, where it sits in the background spooling any files sent to the printer port. Instead it allows you to select a bunch of files that you want printing and will automate the processes. So you can go off and make yourself a nice cup of tea while it takes care of sending all the files off to the printer.

If you want to spool FinalWriter or Wordworth files reember to print from them to a disk file and then select this from within PrinterSpooler.



Print lots of files at once – go on, you know you want to

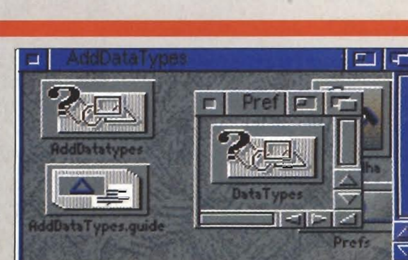
ADDDATATYPES

Author: Christian Bucher ● Requires Workbench 3.0

This is a straight forward replacement for the original AddDatatype command that comes with Workbench 3.0 and above. The command adds your Datatypes to the operating system so they are accessible by a Datatype aware program.

A problem with the original is that it can only handle Datatypes being in the single DEVS:Datatype drawer. When Workbench 3.0 first came out this was not a problem but now, a good few years on, there are a whole plethora of Datatypes and the drawer is beginning to look rather full and crowded.

This replacement will allow you to create new directories in the Datatype drawer and so organise it that little bit better. On top of this the new version also allows additional information about the Datatypes to be stored. Either edit the program tooltypes to edit or use the edit switch from the CLI.



USA news

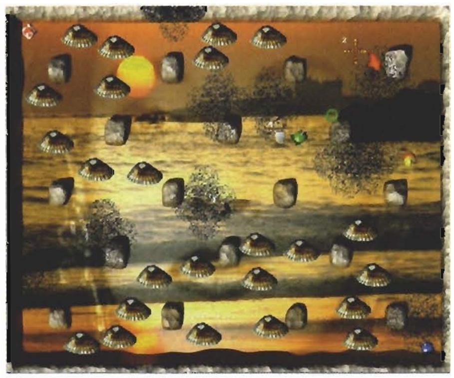
by Katherine Nelson

NUKE-EM

Aurora Works, Inc. will be releasing H-Bomb, a multi-player networkable (TCP/IP and AHI) action game for the Amiga in August. It will be sold both directly and through retail channels. H-Bomb will be available in stores in September. The game is in the genre of the Bomberman series, with a top-down view of the playing field.

A demo version of H-Bomb is already available at http://www.auroraworks.com/files.html. The demo version does not include networking ability, and includes only the first of 20 available playing fields.

This modernized and more complex version of the Combat type game of the Atari years allows players to choose between four different tank characters: Firecracker, Mr. Mean, Turbo, and Razorback. Shooting the seashells on screen reveals bonus items, one of which is the Energizer bunny.



The full version of the game will be distributed only on CD-ROM. The game plays directly from the CD-ROM, and no installation is necessary. Up to four people may play at once on a single machine or distributed among two different networked computers. It is Cybergraphics and AGA compatible, requires Workbench 3.x, and is OS and multitasking friendly. Graphics were created by Eric Schwartz. A game editor is included. No price estimate was given. Contact Aurora Works, Inc. at info@auroraworks.com for more information, or visit http://www.auroraworks.com/hbomb.html.

I'M FREE

The demo version of the Retail Escort v4.1, an Amiga point of sale system, was released by Mr. Hardware in June. It is currently available on Aminet under the name RE41DEMO. Retail Escort provides accounts receivable/payable, invoicing, inventory control, purchase orders, order tracking, mailing list, label printing, and report printing features among others. This software allows one to operate a retail or other business using the Amiga computer.

Mr. Hardware also states in the Retail Escort press release that they are 100% Amiga. They are also the publishers of SBase4 and SBase4Pro.

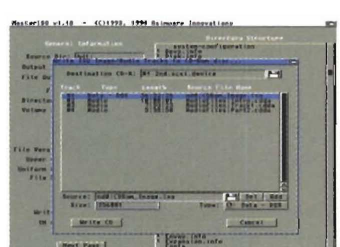
WE DO LIKE IT

In an interview for Boot magazine for the July 1997 issue, Ted Waitt of Gateway 2000 was questioned on the Amiga purchase. It was mentioned that although the main initial motivation for the purchase were the patents involved, they have become much more interested in working with the technology. Waitt also stated that among the positive aspects to the Amiga is the supportive attitude of its users and the operating system's efficiency.

ALADDINS BACK

Nova Design, Inc. has scheduled Aladdin 4D 5.0 to be shipped in July. New features include removal of the dongle copy protection, a new reconfigurable Workbench style interface, more types of special lighting, and Arexx support. Upgrade price to those owning an earlier version of Aladdin 4D or ImageFX 2.6 will be $99.95US. Owners of older versions of Aladdin 4D who do not yet own ImageFX 2.6 may purchase both at once for the special prices of $124.95US.

CD SUPREMO



Asimware released a maintenance update for MasterISO, the Amiga CD-R software. This update adds support for the Mitsumi CR-2201 and the Yamaha CDR-400 CD-R drives. The new version also recognizes the Grundig CDR100IPW, JVC 2010, Smart and Friendly 1002, 2004, 2006, Mitsumi CR-2401, and the HP 6020 CD-R drives. Registered users can find the update on the web site, http://www.asimware.com, or through direct contact at the phone number or address given in the contact information. The full version is available for $199US or $249CDN.

CONTACT POINT

Aurora Works, Inc.
358-114 Queen Mary Rd.
Kingston, Ontario K7M 7E8
Canada
WWW: www.auroraworks.com
Email: info@auroraworks.com

Mr. Hardware
59 Storey Ave.
Central Islip, NY 11722-2332
USA
Voice/Fax: 516-234-8110
Email: hardware@li.net

The AmigaZone
WWW:
http://www.amigazone.com
Email: harv@amigazone.com

Asimware Innovations Inc.
600 Upper Wellington Street,
Unit #D
Hamilton, Ontario L9A 3P9
Canada
Voice: 905-578-4916
Fax: 905-578-3966
WWW:
http://www.asimware.com
FTP: ftp.asimware.com
Email: info@asimware.com

Nova Design, Inc
1910 Byrd Ave, Suite 204
Richmond, VA 23230
Voice: 804-282-5868
Fax: 804-282-3768

Amiga Web Awards



In 1994 things looked bad for the Amiga. Through mismanagement and corporate blundering, Commodore was in serious difficulty. The speed and power of the PC and the predominance of Microsoft meant the Amiga was rapidly becoming outdated, underpowered and unsellable. Things went from bad to worse, the big software houses phased out development of new games and you'd have been hard pressed to find anything Amiga related in a software store.

Now, in 1997, you can upgrade your Amiga to run faster than most PCs (despite there not even being a parent company until recently), you can buy a huge amount of very professional looking graphics packages and there are currently well over 100 games in development. The machine should be dead, why is it not?

The answer is simple. Shops decided not to stock Amiga software so companies sprang up to sell software on-line. The big software companies stopped developing games and developers started producing their own games, making them accessible on-line.

Now almost half of all Amiga owners have a CD-Rom drive and a much faster processor than the last machine Commodore brought out. Simply put, the Internet has given the Amiga a new lease of life, enabling the platform to ride out the bad times until it found a new parent company and a new impetus.

The Amiga's on-line presence is now huge, so peruse our selection of the best in Amiga sites on the Net. To help you along the way, make sure you have the latest versions of your browser. Amiga Web browsers must be the most feaveriously developed programs at the moment, and it has to be said they do seem to get the most coverage. In the form of reviews, features and straightforward Internet columns.

To make your browsing life even more

Welcome to Amiga Computing's definitive guide to the best Amiga Web sites on-line

comfortable, the current versions of iBrowse and Voyager both support most HTML 3.2 tags and the next up and coming versions are going to include Javascript. Perhaps in the future we will even see Voyager coming out with full blown Java running on it thanks to its work with Haage and Partner's Merapi development. What ever happens, the Amiga's on-line future looks bright.

LOST IN CYBERSPACE

With a 1000 new Web sites being added to the Internet, the World Wide Web is a big place and if you are anything like me, you can get lost in the Arndale centre, even with half of it blown up. This is when you need a friendly face to show you the way, and there are a few of these available in the form of search engines and Web site directories.

Just like a phone book, these hold huge lists and descriptions of Web sites. A search for anything on Alta Vista produces 30,180,617 sites, which should be its entire catalogue so far. That figure will be out of date now as undoubtedly new sites have already been added.

So even with these so called search engines, you can have a problem finding the Web site you want. If you just search for Amiga on AltaVista, you get 284,704 different Web sites. Unless you can specify more keywords to narrow your search, frustration is going to set in pretty quickly, not to mention a large phone bill.

In this sort of situation there are two routes you can take (well three, but the third is give up which is not the sort of thing we do around here). Firstly you can delve into one of the suggested sites hoping to find a [illegible] of related links from this page. This is a little hit and miss but can provided fruitful – many a time I have found good sites not listed by search engines.

The second option is not always viable, [illegible] we Amiga owners are very lucky, you can take a trip [illegible] your local Amiga Web Directory. If you are looking [illegible] Amiga site this should be your first stop.

Generally the same type of organisation an[illegible] abilities can be found at Yahoo. With specific [illegible]ies that can be searched, you can usually find a s[illegible]e within a few minutes of looking.

COMPANIES

NATIONAL AMIGA
www.nationalamiga.com
This is a good Canadian Amiga retailers site powered by an Amiga 3000. Regular bargains are up for grabs, and it will pay for old Amiga hardware
content 3 design 3 links 3 overall 3

PIOS
www.pios.de
Find out all the latest news about the new multiOS PowerPC machines from PIOS
content 3 design 3 links 1 overall 2

PHASE 5
www.phase5.de
The largest third party Amiga hardware manufactures. Get news and technical help for all its products
content 3 design 4 links 1 overall 3

IREESOFT
home.t-online.de/home/irseesoft/
Homepage of Ireesoft who writes the rather wonderful TurboPrint. It's a German site but updates to TurboPrint are available if you can work out where to look
content 3 design 2 links 1 overall 2

DIGITA
www.digita.com
Digita's own site, learn about all its new PC software and get your hands on the Wordworth Picasso update. Annoying Javascripts included, slow connection
content 3 design 3 links 1 overall 3

SOFTWOOD
www.softwood.com
The lovely looking Softwood site has all the latest details and support for all its Amiga products. Also the latest version of Enforcer is here
content 4 design 4 links 2 overall 4

CLOANTO
www.cloanto.com
Italian Amiga supremeos Cloanto is on-line and its Amiga section has its very own Amiga Web Workbench, worth a look
contents 4 design 4 links 3 overall 4

BLITTERSOFT
blittersoft.wildnet.co.uk
Blittersoft's very own newly designed Web site, now with added frames. Details of all its products are available here
conent 3 design 3 links 2 overall 3

HIQ
www.hiq.co.uk
Essentially the home page for HiQ's Siamese system. Get the low down on its RTG system and what it can do for your Amiga and PC
content 3 design 2 links 2 overall 3

HISOFT
www.hisoft.co.uk
The seemingly continually changing HiSoft site. Includes complete product details and up-to-date bargains for you to get your grubby hands on. iBrowse updates can be found here
content 3 design 3 links 2 overall 3

PRODAD
www.prodad.de
Writer of the new operating system pOS as well as top video editing and titling software
content 4 design 3 links 2 overall 3

HAAGE & PARTNER
www.haage-partner.com
If you want to know anything about Haage and Partner's top rated products, this is the place to be. All its latest developments are here to read about and regular updates and add-ons are always available
content 4 design 3 links 2 overall 4

NOVADESIGN
www.novadesign.com
The home of ImageFX and Aladdin 4D. Not much to look at, mainly the art gallery, but there is access to its FTP site for ImageFX and Aladdin goodies
content 3 design 2 links 1 overall 3

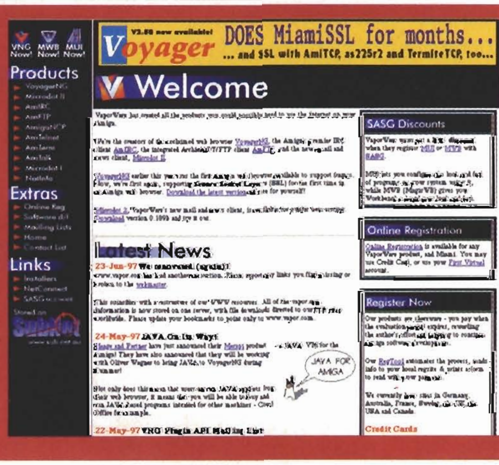
SOFTWARE HUT
www.softhut.com
The top American software and hardware retailer is on-line with their complete catalogue. Special prices available for on-line shoppers
content 3 design 2 links 1 overall 3

AMIGA INTERNATIONAL
www.amiga.de
The famous Amiga home has been back up and running for some time now, redesigned and better than ever
content 3 design 3 links 3 overall 3

VAPOR SOFTWARE

www.vapor.com

One reason there are just so many Amiga's on-line right now is to do with the great Internet software available. Now the Amiga may be lagging behind a little on the browser front but the other types of Internet software should not be overlooked, and one company that has done more to push Amiga Internet software is Vaporware providing the best in IRC, FTP, WWW and eMail software. The recently redesigned site is easy to navigate and looks good to. If you need Internet software this is where you should go, on-line registration and downloads areall available.



PERSONAL/USER GROUPS

WESTERN DISTRICT HELP PAGE
www.pnc.com.au/~mother/menu.html
A lengthy title maybe, but a very useful site for anybody wanting to set up an Amiga user group or to improve the one they're already running. Written by the Western District User Group of Australia, the page includes loads of tips and hints for improving membership, increasing funding and promoting a user group. In addition to this the site has a huge database of world-wide Amiga user groups so you can find your nearest local group. A well laid out and easy to use site
content 5 design 3 links 5 overall 4

COMMODORE USERS GROUP OF IRELAND
www.cugi.ie/
Although the CUGI pages look quite dull, the site does provide loads of useful information for Amiga owners around the Dublin area. As well as details about the club and its activities, the CUGI site provides information on the organisation's hardware, software and reference book auctions. There are also links to Commodore 128 and PET pages for those ancient enough to remember the machines
content 3 design 2 links 3 overall 3

MUTLEY'S MOSTLY AMIGA PAGE
www.mcs.surrey.ac.uk/Personal/Student/ma61as/
He spells 'thanks' 'thanx' and his motto is "If only everything in life were Wacky", what more do you need to know? This bloke's a doofuss. The Web site itself is the epitome of dullness but you must visit this page if only to have a look at the 'poem to e-mail to people' – an appalling (probably American) poem on being killed by a drunk driver. It's not often that I laugh at very sad, emotive subjects but you will too after reading this sentimental, schmaltzy crap
content 2 design 2 links 1 overall 2

The Deal Amiga Club

freespace.virgin.net/screaming.slave/frameset.htm

Apparently the Deal Amiga Club is going from strength to strength with extra nights being introduced to cope with demand. The page isn't bad either. The whole thing looks well designed and laid out and includes a downloadable poster for the group so that, if you're a Kent resident you can print it off and flypost it onto local shops, churches and old people. Good thinking...

content 4 design 4 links 3 overall 4

Queen Mary & Westfield College Amiga Society

www.qmw.ac.uk/~amiga/

Boasting stacks of information, loads of links and features and an 'Amiga Grafitti' Web chat page, this site is well worth a visit if you're a well informed Amiga owner. However, it's not the sort of site you'd visit for a bit of light entertainment as it's quite dry and technical and humour is definately not in evidence

content 4 design 4 links 4 overall 4

Amiga Users Group of Western New York

www.bluemoon.net/~tronix/News.html

Amiga user groups often have very contrived initials; BUGGS, MACE, MECCA etc, but this New York based group is calling itself CHIPS. I can't quite figure what the initials stand for, but maybe it is just a great fan of the excellent early '80s police motorbike riders programme. Anyway, great page. Well designed and easy to use

content 3 design 4 links 3 overall 3

Wigan/Lancs User Group

www.ssamiga.warp.co.uk/usergrp.html

A very friendly little Web site this one, giving the surfer a little peek at what its like to be a member of an Amiga User Group and what activities it offers. Surprisingly one of the big cheeses of the society looks just like Begbie from Trainspotting

content 3 design 3 links 2 overall 3

AmigaNet

www.amiganet.com/

No less than a listing of everybody on the Net with an Amiga. Basically you register here, include name, e-mail account, links to your web pages and your hardware set up and you'll be added to the monster page of links

content 4 design 2 links 5 overall 4

FUN

Dan Barretts Home Page

www.cs.umass.edu/~barrett/public.html

For those of you who don't know, Dan Barrett is a Ph.D. student in the Computer Science Department at the University of Massachusetts and something of a celebrity in the Amiga world. Dan's look at all things Amiga treads the dangerous middle ground between gently amusing and annoyingly tedious. Claim to fame: He's appeared in Zippy the Pinhead, that annoying and pretentious comic strip in the Sunday Guardian

content 3 design2 links 2 overall 3

Eric Schwartz

www.coax.net/people/erics/

Yes, that's right, Eric Schartz is that bloke who draws squirrels with big chebs. Eric's animations and strips have proved immensely popular with the Amiga community and his work can be found on hundreds of Web sites. As well as the famous 'Sabrina Online' strip, Eric is responsible for all those pictures of bloodied but resolute Amiga's standing up to the PC threat. The Web site's nice enough, big, quite friendly and stock full of loads of Sabrina archives

content 4 design 4 links 3 overall 3

Amiga Decade

www.rust.net/~mignash/decade.html

If you've got a few minutes to spare, drop into Amiga Decade and learn what remarkable things happened 10 years ago in the world of Amiga. Quelle surprise! Apparently 10 years ago, Commodore was knee deep in legal trouble and internal dispute...

content 2 design 2 links 2 overall 2

GAMES

ClickBOOM

home.ican.net/~clkboom/

ClickBOOM is one of the few sites that anybody interested in the future of the machine should visit. The site details ClickBOOM's move towards PowerPC and the extent of its co-operation with Phase5. You can even cast a vote for games to be ported over to the Amiga on the Wishlist page. Nicely laid out and very interesting

content 5 design 4 links 4 overall 4

Neo Software

www.info.co.at/neo/games-e.htm

Something of an enigma this one. The first time I checked out this Web site I thought it was years out of date. However, check the document info and you'll find it's brand, spanking new. Although quite confusing to navigate around, the site includes details of loads of German Amiga games that haven't seen the light of day in the UK. Much of the site is currently under construction but is well worth a visit

content 4 design 4 links 3 overall 4

Vulcan Software

www.vulcan.co.uk/

Vulcan is the world's largest producers and stockists of Amiga Software and this is reflected in the quality and quantity of its Web pages. The site is updated regularly and the pages provide an ample source of information on Vulcan's expanding range of software (and now hardware). Blurb and screenshots from all the current Vulcan games are posted on the site and you can even find some lovely piccies of Lisa, Paul and the other Vulcan employees. You should also find quite a few demos here

content 4 design 4 links 4 overall 4

Digital Anarchy Software

www.users.zetnet.co.uk/dasoft/

Chris Page is currently working on an impressive Babylon5 meets Elite type game for the Amiga. His Web site includes the full details of the game including the technical aspects of programming the game and the storyline and historical background to the alien cultures in the game. Although at the moment sadly devoid of many screenshots (there are only about two from the game at the moment), this site promises to improve as the games development continues

content 4 design 3 links 2 overall 3

Sagittarius Software

sagsoft.ald.net/cgi-bin/Web_store/web_store.cgi

Sagittarius Software's page is worth a listing because it can be quite tricky

Amiga Flame

www.d-n-a.net/users/dnetPwic/amiflame.htm

Amiga Flame is undoubtedly one of the best Amiga games sites and perhaps one of the best overall Amiga related sites. From its inception back in November of last year, the site has just grown and grown. It now boasts pages and pages of the latest Amiga gaming news, a guide to developing your own games and a tonnes of links.

Another point in its favour is the fact that Philip Cosby updates his pages regularly – probably about twice a week so you are more or less guaranteed to find new snippets of information about new games every time you visit. Another excellent feature is the 'Future Releases' page – a huge table chocka with games releases and links. At the last count there were about 100 games on the page.

In addition to just reading about forthcoming games, Amiga Flame lets you download some of the better titles. This month you can get hold of Vulcan's Scions of a Forgotten World and next month you should be able to download Titan's Brain Killer Doom clone.

The design of the site is simple and easy to navigate and not too laden down with annoying and processor hungry animated GIFs. Every news story that has been featured on the site since November is archived away so you can follow the history and development of a game from the first time it appeared on the site. If you want to see what's happening in the Amiga games world, take a look at this site.

content 5 design 5 links 5 overall 5

for Amiga owners to get games in the states and virtually impossible to order them over the Internet. Sagittarius is an Amiga dedicated on-line store so, if you can't find your game of choice here – give up!
content 5 design 3 links 3 overall 4

AURORA

www.auroraworks.com/forum.html
Quite a puzzling site this. Bright, clean, well laid out and strangely dull. The one thing I never understood about Aurora's Zone 99 project was why if it was written using such high spec machines does it look so cak? If you're an Amiga techy freak have a look at this page. If you're just browsing you mightn't find much of interest
content 2 design 2 links 3 overall 3

FOUNDATION

www.amigasupport.com/paulburkey/
Although only one page, Paul Burkey's site provides ample details of his forthcoming new Settlers type game Foundation. The site includes screenshots and a list of e-mails to contact about the game
content 4 design 3 links 2 overall 3

TEAM17

www.team17.co.uk/
Although Team17 doesn't really produce games for the Amiga anymore, the Team17 Web site is the home of the Worms pages. The Worms stuff should keep you occupied for a while, whilst the collection of photographs from drunken Xmas parties and the like should give you a laugh. Funny and interesting
content 4 design 5 links 4 overall 5

BLACKBLADE SOFTWARE

www2.shiny.it/~yagg/
BlackBlade is a group of Italian developers who is currently working on The Shadow of the Third Moon – a very impressive looking futuristic flight sim for the Amiga. Its Web pages detail the specs, progress and history of the game. Although perhaps a little too dry and technical, BlackBlades pages are worth visiting if only for the amazing screenshots of the game
content 4 design 4 links 3 overall 4

TITAN COMPUTERS

www.vossnet.de/titanhb/
Titan is the developer behind up and coming Amiga titles such as BrainKiller and Sword. The Web site itself is nothing special but is well worth looking up, if only to have a peek at some of the games that could be coming our way by the Autumn
content 4 design 2 links 2 overall 3

MAGAZINES

AMIGA REPORT

www.cucug.org/ar/ar.html
Amiga Report is possibly the longest running on-line Amiga magazine, now into its fifth year. Quality editorial and comment is guaranteed by the editor/publisher Jason Compton. Thoroughly recommended. Easy access is through CuCug's front end, nice
content 5 design 2 links 2 overall 5

CU-AMIGA

www.cu-amiga.co.uk
Find out all about CU's latest CD cock ups. A few on-line features and Amiga links, lovley pictures of the staff
content 2 design 4 links 2 overall 3

AMIGA FORMAT

www.futurenet.com/amiganet/
Well FutureNet has been redesigned and they finally decided to add an Amiga section but as yet there is nothing there but a bunch images
content 1 design 2 links 0 overall 0.5

AMAZING COMPUTING

www.pimpub.com/
The world's longest running Amiga mag, no matter what we say. Not too much there at the moment, a few news items and links
content 2 design 1 links 2 overall 1

AMIGA NEWS AUSTRALIA

www.ozemail.com.au/~pospisil/ANA.html
On-line version of a sporadic Australian news letter, get a brief glimpse of the print version and why not order yourself an issue?
content 2 design 1 links 1 overall 1

AMIGA NORTH NEWSLETTERS

www.randomize.com/newsletters.html
Canadian and N. American news letter. Find full versions on-line, quick access is guaranteed as it's text only
content 4 design 1 links 1 overall 3

AMIGA REVIEW

www.mediasft.demon.co.uk/ARMagazine/arindex.html
Another on-line version of a mail order UK magazine. Not too much apart from telling you what's in the mag, but you can get a preview copy
content 2 design 3 links 1 overall 2.5

AMIGA UPDATE

www.globaldialog.com/Adventure-Central/AU/index.html
Another on-line magazine with downloadable text files for you to read. Mainly just reiterating the main Amiga news
content 3 design 1 links 1 overall 2

YOUNG MONKEY, WHO KNOWS?

www.youngmonkey.ca/nose/index.html
Not a magazine, but a listing of articles and reviews that have appeared in Amiga magazines including Amiga Computing and Amiga World. Nicely done
content 3 design 3 links 1 overall 3

GENERATION

generation.www.de/
A 'scene' magazine, you know the sort of thing, disk swappers, elite coders, and the like, bit like Grapevine, if you remember that. Lots and lots of coders/scene type stuff. Very much worth a look, if you like that sort of thing
content 5 design 3 links 3 overall 4

THE LAIR

amigaworld.com/thelair/index.html
A complete magazine on-line the Lair has news, reviews, letters and more all on-line and regularly updated, what more do you want?
content 5 design 3 links 4 overall 4

NORTHWEST AMIGA JOURNAL

www.rdrop.com/users/bern/Web_NAJ/
A well put together electronic version of Northwest American user groups journal that also links to its user group. It's well laid out and has some useful Amiga articles
content 4 design 3 links 1 overall 3

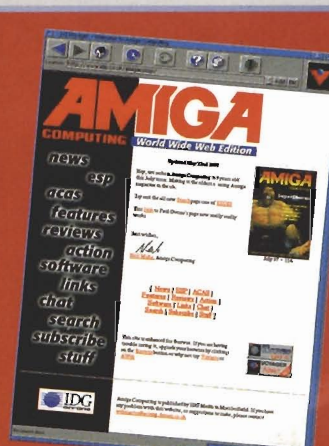
STATUS REGISTER

www.cucug.org/sr.html
The lovely people that brought us the Amiga Web Directory also produce the CUCUG status register. This is really a monthly newsletter for the CUG user group but has plenty of Amiga and Mac news
content 4 design 1 links 1 overall 3

AMIGA COMPUTING

www.idg.co.uk/amigacomp/

Wow, what a site! News, letters, problems solved, information, links, chat and all -new search page. Do not miss the Stuff page including World Of Amiga show Mpeg audio, and Paul Overaa's own little corner of the Web. Not to be missed, narcissistic people are more than welcome



content 5 design 5 links 5 overall 5

The Word

www.geocities.com/TimesSquare/Castle/4466/

No so much an on-line magazine but a downloadable disk mag. That's about it, why not try it out?

content 2 design 3 links 1 overall 3

Amiga Net

www.amiganet.com

An interesting way for Amiga users to find each other. You can add yourself to the list and search for people

content 4 design 2 links 5 overall 3

The Informer

www.amigainformer.com/

On-line version of the print magazine Amiga Informer, site includes recent news and reviews

content 3 design 2 links 2 overall 2.5

GRAPHICS

The Unofficial Cinema 4D Homepage

www.informatik.unitrier.de/CIP/hfrieden/

It may be unofficial but it's still pretty good quality. The site includes tutorials on how to use Cinema 4D as well as a gallery full of images created using the package. Some of the stuff in the gallery is by Emmanuelle Hearn, the guy responsible for a number of tops Amiga games including Trapped 2 and the forthcoming Pheonix

content 4 design 4 links 3 overall 4

Impulse Inc.

www.coolfun.com/who.htm

Impulse produces the top Amiga graphics package Imagine. This quite substantial site includes product support, news of special deals and new software and the all important gallery so you can see what the end results look like. A must for all budding Amiga artists

content 4 design 3 links 4 overall 4

Amiga Lightwave FAQ

www.newtek.com/tech/faqs/lightwav/amiga.html

Lightwave is the Amiga graphics package that ensured the special effects on telly programmes like Babylon5, SeaQuest and Star Trek looked as good as proper movie effects. Understandably, using Lightwave is quite tricky. Therefore the Amiga Lightwave FAQ page would be well worth a visit if your trying to aquint yourself with the world of special effects

content 4 design 4 links 3 overall 3

NovaDesign

www.novadesign.com

As you probably know, NovaDesign is the company responsible for Aladdin4D and ImageFX, a couple of the most popular graphics applications for the Amiga. The site looks interesting, is laid out well and has got some cool stuff in it, including a big gallery full of weird and wonderful images

content 4 design 3 links 1 overall 3

Amiga 3D Net

www.hib.no/~db95mbm/index.html

Although still under construction, the 3D Net page looks like it'll mature into an excellent site for anybody interested in 3-D animation on the Amiga. Aimed at Aladdin users, the site includes stills from top animations, news and links to other graphics related sites

content 3 design 4 links 3 overall 3

Yo Ho Video - The Artwork of James D Sachs

users.deltanet.com/users/jpalmer/sachs.html

Strewth we're getting all South Bank Show now. This interesting little page gives a potted history of one of the Amiga's most prolific and longest running artists. He's done artwork for loads of games including Defender of the Crown and Centurions so you've probably seen his work already

content 3 design 2 links 2 overall 2

Amiga Hotspot

www.akula.com/~inzane/

An Amiga Web page with a focus on Video Toaster and Flyer stuff. If your needing tips and hints for a variety of graphics applications check out this site. Particularly nice is the Amiga Workbenchy sort of layout. Well worth a visit

content 4 design 5 links4 overall 4

AMIGA MUSIC

Sidewinder Productions

www.best.com/~uvi/sidewind/tribspac.au

Eric Geiseke aka Sidewinder is a Texas based Techo musician whose main claim to fame is his use of the Amiga to create his music. Worth a visit for those interested in the Amiga music

content 3 design 3 links 2 overall 2

Conemelt

www1.haywire.co.uk/haywire/emissions/index.html

Conemelt's page, hosted on their record label Emissions Audio Output gives a potted history of this Amiga using band. Their particular brand of 'radical techno' has been described as being like a 'robo-Rottweiler that is intimidating, charming, aggressive and playful at the same time

content 4 design 5 links 2 overall 3

U4ia's Mod Page

sw.cse.bris.ac.uk/public/u4iamods.html

Are you after stacks of mods and tools to unpack 'em with. If so this could well be the page for you. U4ia's mod page is just one of the pages on U4ia's website - the others having somewhat less of an Amiga content but are fascinating nonetheless

content 5 design 3 links 2 overall 3

TekLords

www.geocities.com/SoHo/1645/tlsmain.htm

What round up of Amiga music pages would be complete without a few demo pages? If you want to take a look at the world of the coder visit the TekLords site. Although the site isn't as organised as some, it's nonetheless pretty big and full of info

content 4 design 3 links 3 overall 3

Totally Illegal Oops Homepage

oops.in.nl/

I'm not entirely sure what's so illegal about them but this homepage is really the best place to go if you're looking for demo stuff. There are tons of links and quite a bit of info about the demo scene. Well worth a look

content 4 design 4 links 5 overall 4

SOFTWARE

BGUI

www.az.com/~ie/bgui/

Everything you ever needed to know about the BGui library is right here. Including all the latest programs to support this interface library

content 3 design 3 links 2 overall 3

AHI

www.lysator.liu.se/~lcs/ahi.html

The very much under covered Amiga Hardware Interface. If you want hardware independent sound for your Amiga this is what you have been looking for

content 4 design 4 links 2 overall 4

CyberGraphX Home

www.best.com/~vgr/cybergfx/

Everything you wanted to know about the CyberGraphX software but were afraid to ask. A great site dedicated to the Amiga's best RTG software

content 5 design 3 links 4 overall 4

Modern Plumbing

www.execulink.com/~jtech/b%26p/

It's a Bars and Pipes support page of course. A regularly updated page that is for everything MIDI and to do with JuperJAM, PatchMeister and Bars and Pipes. If you use Bars and Pipes check it out

content 5 design 4 links 3 overall 5

SASG

www.sasg.com

Home of MUI and MagicWB, this is possibly one of the best looking Web sites I have ever seen. With software support and on-line registration this is a great site to visit

content 4 design 5 links 2 overall 4

Emulators Unlimited

www.aic.net.au/~rodneyn/

A site dedicated to all the freely avail-

able emulators available on the Amiga. Not so much a guide to using them but a list of all that are available
content 3 design 2 links 4 overall 3

Cinema 4D

www.cinema4d.com
This award winning German software has its very own Web site. 800x600 screen is recommended. Some good pictures are available in the gallery
content 3 design 2 links 1 overall 2.5

Image Engineer

yallara.cs.rmit.edu.au/~sbe/
An absolutely lovely image processing tool that supports many different filters and alpha channels. Requires the SuperView and BGUI libraries
content 3 design 2 links 1 overall 3

SuperView

home.t-online.de/home/ Andreas_Kleinert/sview.htm
The support home page for this comprehensive collection of image manipulation libraries. More for programmers, but you can get all the update news as well
contents design links overall

Emulators

www.pncl.co.uk/~martinc/emulators/
Another Amiga emulator page, this one gives you some very up to date information about the latest developments with all the emulators out there
content 4 design 2 links 4 overall 3

Syzygy

www.syz.com
Creator of the excellent astronomy program The Digital Universe. If you are at all interested in space or astronomy, check it out
content 5 design 3 links 2 overall 4

Alien Design

user.cs.tu-berlin.de/~zerocom/alien-design.html
Writer of the ever so groovy MCP, SysSpeed and SCALOS. All these programs are supported from this Web site and so it is worth a visit
content 5 design 2 links 2 overall 4

Studio Software

www.ajdean.demon.co.uk/studio/
Really part of Andy Dean's home page but here he offers support for all his Studio series of software, such as DrawStudio. Go there now
content 5 design 4 links 2 overall 4

RESOURCES

AmiCrawler

www.amicrawler.com/
AmiCrawler is a site that keeps updated lists of different types of Amiga software, hardware and other information. All the categories are searchable and makes finding Amiga information very easy
content 5 design 4 links 5 overall 4

Aminet

www.aminet.org/~aminet
A WWW interface to the humongous software archive that we all know and love, Aminet. You can access Aminet a number of ways and a search engine is included. However a Web browser is not exactly the best way
content 3 design 3 links 1 overall 3

Search Aminet

harvest.tu-clausthal.de/AmiNET/
A better way to search Aminet is through this site. Complex search categories, specific directories and download sites can all be specified
content 2 design 4 links 1 overall 5

Technical Reference

A searchable collection of Amiga technical documents provided by National Amiga, not completely encompassing and the search is a little to board but it is a very good place to start looking
content 5 design 3 links 4 overall 4

UK ISP Support

www.ch.qub.ac.uk/staff/postdoc/tim/support/index.html
A page devoted to ISPs that support the Amiga in the UK including a number of dial scripts for Miami and links to the latest Amiga Internet software
content 3 design 3 links 4 overall 4

MISCELLANEOUS

Amiga World

www.amigaworld.com
Amiga World is one of the newer Amiga sites and is offereing a few services you won't find anywhere else. One is version check where you can find out what the latest versions of the most widley used programs are. Lately it has also added support for programmers to promote their new programs. Many of the home page links are worth checking as they are all quite good looking
content 4 design 3 links 3 overall 4

Shapeshifter Homepage

http://www.uni-mainz.de/~bauec002/SSMain.html
If you need to know anything at all about Shapeshifter, the Mac emulator for Amiga and DraCo computers, look here. Although perhaps a little dull looking, the page is full of useful information and includes loads of links to other Shapeshifter pages
content 4 design 3 links 3 overall 3

Titan Computers

http://www.vossnet.de/titanhb/
This Web site includes information on a load of really impressive games for the Amiga. Recently it clinched a deal to publish Shadow of the Third moon – a game I reckon anybody with a decent spec Amiga is going to buy. It is also behind Brainkiller
content 5 design 3 links 3 overall 4

Pure Amiga

http://www.pureamiga.co.uk/
Pure Amiga is an excellent online Amiga E-zine. Although the features, editorials and links are all good, the real gem on this site is the news section. Updated often and regularly, the page includes an excellent search engine that allows quick and easy perusal of the latest Amiga news
content 5 design 4 links 4 overall 4

Power Computing

www.powerc.com
Power Computing joins the Amiga online community. Get the latest details of their new accelerator range and if you are stuck get email their support line.
content 3 design 3 links 1 overall 3

Amiga Web Directory

www.cucug.org/amiga.html

You knew it would get a mention at some point. The Amiga Web Directory has become the place to find the latest Amiga links and news. Well laid out (a HTML 3 compatible browser is choice) and updated daily, the Web directory should be your first stop when trying to locate any Amiga page or resource.

If you find yourself regually looking for Amiga sites it is well worth taking your time and getting to know the layout of the site, as there is lots to look at
content 5 design 5 links 5 overall 5



Cyber Picasso IV



Will Dan Winfield, long term CyberVision user, be wooed by the Picasso IV?

Any Amiga user who has made the investment in a graphics board for their big box Amiga will tell you what an improvement it made over their original chipset. What's more, every good magazine reviewer will always start a graphics board article by mentioning the extra screen resolutions and greater number of colours that one can now make their Amiga display.

Nowadays however, most graphics boards can display 24 bit screens using Cybergraphics or Picasso 96 software and assuming you have enough Video memory they can reach resolutions of up to 1600 x 1200 in high colour modes.

Enter the Picasso IV, the latest multimedia graphics card from Village Tronic. This board does more than just give you an enhanced Workbench using the advanced Picasso 96 software, it also comes with a sound module, a flicker fixer and a plethora of future expansion options ranging from MPEG boards to PowerPC modules. Plenty of toys for the hungry Amiga users to get their teeth stuck into. Wait, it doesn't stop there.

This board is 64 bit and is designed for speed. "How fast?" I hear you ask. "How does it compare to other graphics boards?" It's funny you should ask, because I was lucky enough to already have a CV64/3D card in my Amiga 4000.

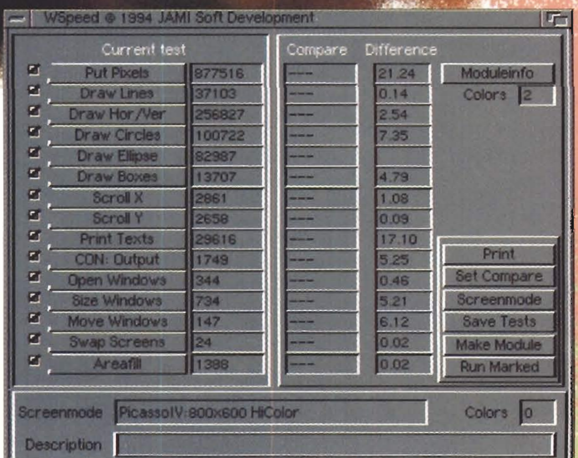


The Picasso 96 preferences

But before I put the two head-to-head let me just tell you a few things about the Picasso IV that you may like to know.

Installation of the Picasso was simple – into my 4000's video slot, nothing more complex than opening the case and pushing the card home. I did read the instructions before I started and rather than remove all the drivers for my Cybervision card, I created a new partition which I would use to boot when I wanted to use the Picasso IV. Then I would be able to swap between the cards by rebooting and turning off the relevant partition in the Amiga early boot screen.

The board booted immediately into the hires interlaced mode I had set before putting the Picasso IV in my 4000. This was a good sign, the flicker fixer was definitely up and running and now all I had to do was install the Picasso 96 software.



Wspeed, the screen flashing benchmark

The software installation, as expected, went without any hiccups and after a reboot I was ready to get going with the Picasso 96 Workbench. At this point I thought back to the time I first installed the CV64/3D board and remembered having to set up all the graphics modes manually for my monitor before I could get going. I don't know what I was worried about. The Picasso IV immediately sparked up into all the modes that had been pre-programmed by the Village Tronic team when I selected them from the Workbench Screen Preferences.

I immediately wanted to test the speed of

SOUND MODULE EXPLAINED

I was initially confused as to how the sound module that comes with the Picasso actually works. Evidently it is possible to capture the sound from the Amiga using the video slots and redirect it through the Picasso. Using a piece of software that is installed with the Picasso, I managed to get the sound to pass through and, using a 3.5mm jack, I attached some PC speakers which I stole from the other side of our office. The quality was indistinguishable from the original Amiga sound. The Picasso claims to be a multimedia card and by carefully integrating sound and vision it clearly has a good set up to live up to its promise.

7/97 FLICKER FIXER DOES NOT PASS THROUGH DBL NTSC

slayer

USEFUL SITES

The Village Tronic site contains a large amount of useful information. You can also download the latest version of Picasso 96 and join the busy mailing list.

Village Tronic Web site
http://www.villagetronic.com/
VGR site
http://www.vgr.com/picassoiv/
Aminet on FTP
src.doc.ic.ac.uk

the card with various applications I use in my day to day work developing Internet sites. ImageFX was begging to be tried out on a 24bit Workbench running at 1024 x 768, so I fired it up in the Cybergraphics preview mode that I previously used with my CV64/3D. The Picasso 96 drivers, which come with the Picasso IV, are API compatible with Cybergraphics, so I had no trouble utilising the Picasso to the full. ImageFX seemed as fast as I had ever seen it, resizing was quick and moving the windows about was snappy.

The quality was great, but I wanted to push the board's limits by opening several screens to see how it reacted when the video memory was being used to the full. Up came Ibrowse 1.1 on one screen and then Directory Opus Magellan on another. Wow! Swapping screens was several times faster than on my CV64/3D and resizing Ibrowse windows was just as fast. For the statisticians among you, take a look at the box out, you will see how the Picasso IV compared to the CV64/3D using a program called Wspeed 1.4.

COMPATABILITY

One thing always important when upgrading to a new piece of hardware is the level of compatibility with existing software. Assuming a program has been written in a system friendly way, I would expect it to continue to work.

This was exactly what I found with all the software on my system that I regarded as important to my work. Magic menu was the only program to be flustered by the Picasso, but I have never been truly happy with the way it operates and I am sure a bug fix is now available. I tried out everything from the Vlab motion video software to the paint package Brilliance and had no trouble whatsoever.

The Picasso comes with a flicker fixer so programs like Brilliance, which need original Amiga screen modes, can be promoted to the higher frequencies needed for the majority of today's SVGA style monitors.

I was concerned that I may not be running the latest version of the Picasso 96 software so I checked the Internet for more information. Sure enough, there was a complete new version waiting for me at the Village Tronic Web site. I managed to find several other relevant Web sites and joined a busy mailing list discussing everything Picasso related. I also got the latest version of the Picasso Preferences program (see screen shot) that enables you to easily play with the settings of the Picasso 96 software. You can set everything from horizontal timings to syncpolarity, that is assuming you take care and have your monitor manual handy to show you its limits. AC

THE NEED FOR SPEED

There are several programs that can measure the speed of a graphics board. I used the program, Wspeed 1.4, which can be found on Aminet in util/moni. This program runs a series of tests, which can be used as a guide to the speed of the graphics board (see screenshot). Fortunately I had two graphics boards to test in the same machine which makes it a much fairer comparison.

The higher the number the better in all cases. The program counts the number of operations it can perform in a 10-second interval.
PicassoIV: 800x600 TrueColor
CV64/3D: 24Bit 800 x 600
AGA: 1 bit 800 x 600

Test	Picasso IV	CyberVision64	AGA
Put Pixels	1087362	206150	95571
Draw Lines	9668	16163	362
Draw Hor/Ver	170897	122205	375
Draw Circles	36524	72734	498
Draw Ellipse	32121	18705	450
Draw Boxes	2724	975	11
Scroll X	497	189	8
Scroll Y	434	172	8
Print Texts	24090	8073	1000
CON: Output	445	208	125
Open Windows	209	201	16
Size Windows	704	708	42
Move Windows	51	61	5
Swap Screens	17	13	402
Areafill	534	152	29

Amiga used: A4000, Cyberstorm I 060, 34MB Ram, 17" Idek.
Boards tested: Picasso IV with Picasso 96 software and Cybervision CV64/3D running Cybergraphics.

Here I used a standard screen mode 800x600 in 24 bit for both cards. As you can see it is extremely difficult to separate the two cards, in fact I wouldn't want to say which is faster. In use they are both extremely fast. I will leave it up to you to place these tests in your own order of preference and then judge from there!

BAD POINTS

Well there is no screen dragging anymore, something which I thought would annoy me but really didn't make any difference. If you have an Amiga 1500 or 2000, you will have to do a bit of DIY to remove the flicker fixer section of the card. This involves you actually cutting out two sections and bending the connector back and forth until the board comes off. Not something I would like to try in a hurry. The main problem with the Picasso IV is a purely selfish one. I have to return it to Village Tronic.

So the Picasso IV is definitely well worth the money especially since it is extremely fast, comes with a flicker fixer and is designed to be expanded over time.

Bottom line

REQUIREMENTS

RED *essential* **BLACK** *recommended*

2.31 Workbench
15" SVGA monitor
10 Mb RAM
17" SVGA monitor

PRODUCT DETAILS

Product	Picasso IV
Supplier	Blittersoft
Price	£299.95
Tel	01908 261 488
E-Mail	sales@blittersoft.com
WWW	www.blittersoft.com

SCORES

Ease of use	95%
Implementation	90%
Value For Money	90%
Overall	92%

Eternal progression

Another update, another review. **Neil Mohr** takes a quick look at what the PPaint 7.1 CD has to offer

While the rest of the world seems to be revolving around 24 bit graphics and moving towards 32 bit, most Amiga users are stuck in the murky world of 8 bit colour, and that's on a good day. So when it comes to the question of whether we still need bitmap based paint programs, the answer for many Amiga users is yes.

So 24 bit paint programs are nice, all right they're bloody great. Just for starters you have no palette worries whatsoever. The problem is, that on a normal AGA machine, you are always going to have to dither down the displayed image, which takes time, not to mention the slow screen update. As bit plane packages are written directly for the Amiga's display, they work a lot faster than anything else.

Another reason that has come to prevalence is the good old World Wide Web (even though it is going through a bit of a depression State side). As anyone who has used it will know the Internet is not exactly fast. Using Internet and fast in the same sentence is doing the word fast an injustice, people should be saying how slow is your modem/Internet connection – if you are lucky you can expect 3K/sec.

Because of this you have to make graphics as small as possible, this means as few colours as possible. Many 24 bit applications do not provide very good control over the palette and image uses while a bit plane based package, such as Ppaint, has no choice but to give you complete control over the palette.

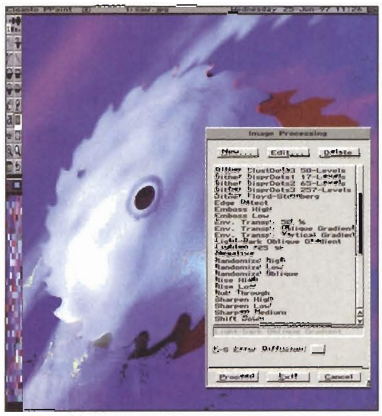
The seventh version Personal Paint has everything you would expect from such a package. All your standard drawing tools, full RTG support, comprehensive image processing, alpha channel, complete animation support and an ARexx interface.

Unlike many other programs, PPaint makes full use of the ARexx interface and provides you not only with an ARexx front end to launch PPaint scripts, but also a large selection of prewritten scripts, many of which are genuinely useful. This allows you to take advantage of them and create your own new scripts by adapting them.

Great things

One of the great things about PPaint is that it is so up-to-date. The whole program is Modula, with most of it being made up of libraries that are loaded when the program is run. As a result of this, all the latest file formats are supported such as PNG, Jpeg, GIF and even the PlayStation TIM format. Cloanto has also added 'virtual' Blitter support that allows graphic data to be stored in fast Ram and not just chip memory, removing most chip Ram limitations. Support is also there for 040 and PowerPC processors, even though the PowerPC routines are apparently only twice as fast as the normal AGA Blitter.

So should you buy Personal Paint? Well, personally, I still paint with Brilliance 2 – for one reason, its great HAM mode. Brilliance came with two versions. Firstly, a standard bitmap version, which PPaint beats hands down, and another version, called TrueBrilliance, which gave your basic AGA user access to a true 24/16bit paint package that was fast to use. Personal Paint does not even allow you to use a normal HAM screen, never mind the 24 bit mode Brilliance provides. It is really only one point and, at the end of the day, if you want 24 bit colour, get a graphics card. Personal Paint has a lot going for it that Brilliance does not. To start with, it is still being supported, big bonus there – try loading a Jpeg or PNG image into Brilliance. Secondly, all the image processing functions, thirdly the ARexx interface and scripts and finally, true RTG support. For your average AGA user this may not mean a lot, but for anyone using a graphics card, this will probably clinch it for PPaint.



Juicy extras

As with all the other Cloanto CDs that have been released, not only do you get the Personal Paint program but a whole host of extra goodies are on the CD for you to use.

The documentation is provided on the CD in the form of a comprehensive AmigaGuide document. To back this up, a number of tutorial animations are on hand that give you a handy guide to certain techniques or may just give you a little inspiration.

Of more practical and direct use is the collection of Cloanto written Datatypes for the latest implementations of the Jpeg, GIF and PNG image formats. There is also the full version of Clonato's ColourType font program.

Bottom line

Requirements

RED essential BLACK recommended

CD-ROM Drive — Gfx card — Hard drive

Product details

Product	Personal Paint 7.1
Supplier	Digita
Price	£29.95
Tel	01395 270273
E-Mail	sales@digita.demon.co.uk
WWW	www.cloanto.com

Scores

Ease of use	90%
Implementation	89%
Value For Money	95%
Overall	93%

Singing

Javascript is a scripting language that can be used within Web pages and the reason it has been hailed as a panacea to many current Web-connected problems is simple – it allows far more processing to be done at the client (your) end of the client-server Internet connection. This helps to both cut down the workload of the host machine plus, in general, speed things up by reducing the amount of Internet message traffic travelling down the lines. The easiest way to appreciate the benefits that Javascript can bring is to look at a couple of examples: Suppose, for instance, that you create a Web page containing a form (collection of text boxes and buttons) for providing user-feedback.

Because conventional Web pages (pure HTML pages) are not 'intelligent', the traditional way of processing such a form is to use tags embedded in the page to send back the user's entries to a script running on the server, that is, to the computer being used at your Internet service provider's end.

It's typically done using something called the common gateway interface (CGI) and one common use of CGI programs, as far as forms are concerned, is to modify or validate input – converting entries to upper case or checking that the user has entered reasonable numerical values into particular fields.

Needless to say, this arrangement not only takes time but also increases the workload for the ISP computer you're connected to. Once an Amiga browser that supports Javascript becomes available, however, this current sequence of events will change. It will become possible to add scripts to Web pages containing forms so that, in many cases, the browser itself will be able to carry out any verification needed sending back the form contents to the server only once they are known to be valid.

And it's not just form processing where there will be benefits. You'll be able to use Javascript to add utility functions to pages setting up forms that represent calculators, provide number base or unit conversions or doing anything else that comes to mind. Page content will also become dynamic, since with Javascript it's possible to conditionally alter the appearance of a page or watch for particular types of events, such as a user activating a link or clicking a button, effectively attaching Javascript routines to those actions. Graphics effects, like timer based page fading, will also become possible and the important thing is that all these things can occur without having to send anything to, or reload anything from, the server.

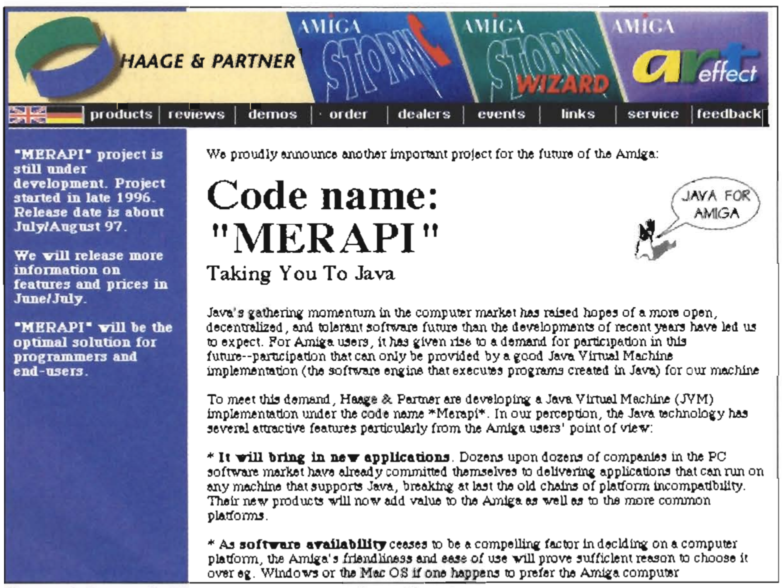
There will be benefits for non-Web users as well. Just as it's possible to create HTML program documentation, help files or any other kind of text/graphics material for viewing locally by a browser (i.e. from floppy or hard drive) rather than via a live Internet connection, such use is going to be possible with pages that contain Javascript. And make no mistake about the language just being another scripting arrangement similar to that which, say, AmigaDOS provides – Javascript is as powerful in many areas as languages like ARexx and C.

So, even if you have absolutely no interest in the Net as such, Javascript could still conceivably be useful for building certain types of applications/utility programs. Automatic slide shows, multimedia presentations and in fact anything else that could make use of a browser window for input/output operations.

Sounds good but the real bonus is that Javascript has been designed to be platform independent. Therefore anything you create on the Amiga will run on everything from PCs and Macs to Unix-based mainframes and this of course is why there's so much interest in its appearance.

That said, however, because Javascript (like HTML itself) is relatively new and to some extent still changing, there are a few inconsistencies with implementations on most platforms. These can cause execution problems with certain scripts and doubtless there'll be similar snags on the Amiga platform as Javascript takes a hold.

The good news though is that rapid progress is being made in ironing out such difficulties and the underlying basics of the language are already stable enough to ensure that portability advantages can be had (providing that any darker, currently implementation dependent, corners of the language are avoided).



Haage & Partner's MERAPI Java project is well underway

Javascript

You don't need any special software to write Javascript code – any normal text editor, such as you might already be using to create your Web pages, will do. Like all computer languages, Javascript insists on certain layout and syntax rules being followed, and to be recognised, the statements which make up the Javascript program have to be placed between script tags in this fashion...

```
<script language = "Javascript">
/* This is where the code would go - and your
programs can be as large as you want! */
</script>
```

Javascript syntax has much in common with C and the lines in the above fragment illustrate Javascript's way of representing multiple line comments. The C++ single line comment, //, is also allowed and so the above comment could equally be written...

```
//This is where the code would go - and your
//programs can be as large as you want!
```

Other similarities with C include the fact that Javascript statements, variables and function names are all case sensitive. Blocks of statements are marked using braces {}, equality

the praises of Javascript

One of the hottest news items of late has been the fact that Javascript is coming to the Amiga. In this whirlwind tour **Paul Overaa** explains what all the fuss is about

uses a double equal sign == and so on. You can even finish a Javascript statement with a semicolon, although this C-style statement terminator is optional.

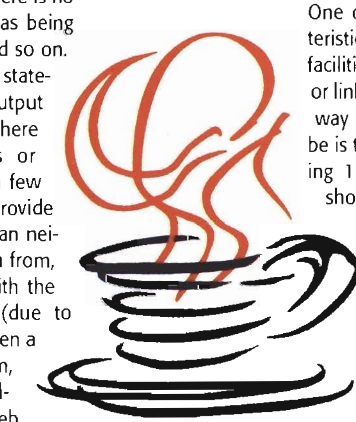
There are, however, a few important areas where Javascript is not like C and luckily these differences (in the main) make Javascript easier to learn. To start with, static text can be defined using either single or double quotes (as with ARexx). And Javascript's variable scoping rules are different – not only are variables defined outside a function regarded as being global (.i.e. visible anywhere in the document) but, by default, variables defined inside functions are also global. As an absolute this would be a serious shortcoming but luckily a 'var' statement is available for overriding such behaviour. Other differences include the fact that variable typing is dynamic so there is no need (or way) to define variables as being integers, floating point numbers and so on.

```
<HTML>
<HEAD>
<SCRIPT LANGUAGE="Javascript">
function SendValue(form)
{
//convert input data to uppercase and send data
form.data.value.toUppeCase();
form.submit();
}
</SCRIPT>
</HEAD>

<BODY>
<FORM NAME="test" METHOD="post"
ACTION="mailto"101745.2100@compuserve.com">
Please type something: <INPUT TYPE="text"
NAME="data" SIZE=40>
<br><br>
<INPUT TYPE="button" NAME="button"
VALUE="Send" onClick="SendValue(this.form)>
</FORM>
</BODY
</HTML>
```

Listing 1: Framework of a simple Java form handler

In addition there are no switch statements nor any console input/output functions like printf() or scanf(). There are also no pointers, structures or unions and Javascript, except for a few strictly limited methods, does not provide conventional file handling and so can neither write data to, nor retrieve data from, disk media. This, in conjunction with the inability to manipulate memory (due to Javascript's lack of pointers), has been a deliberate design objective – the aim, of course, being to limit the possibility of spreading viruses through Web pages.



Objects galore

Although not an object-oriented language in the true sense, objects do nevertheless play a large part in Javascript programming. Displayed documents, links, anchors, forms with their buttons and text boxes are just some of Javascript's objects and as such have both their own properties and functions (so called 'methods') which can be applied to them. For example, bgColor and fgColor are document properties which specify the background and foreground colours that should be used. You might therefore set the foreground (text) colour of a document to black using this statement...

```
document.fgColor=#000000;
```

Similarly, one of the methods used to place text into a document is called 'write' and to dynamically place a 'Welcome to Javascript' message onto a page you'd use...

```
document.write("Welcome to Javascript!");
```

Event handling

One of Javascript's most important characteristics is that it has built-in event handling facilities that can detect the use of buttons or links, page re-loading and so on. The best way to get an idea of how useful this can be is to look at a complete example and listing 1 provides just such an illustration. It shows a code framework containing a SendValue() function that might be used to collect a text field from a simple form and convert it to uppercase before sending the form information to it's e-mail destination. The function itself has been placed in the header section of the web page but notice also that one of the form Send button attributes is given as...

```
onClick="SendValue(this.form)"
```

This onClick event specifier tells the browser to call the function SendValue(), which we've written into the page, whenever a user activates the Send button. As written the parameter provided to the function is the whole form, i.e. a form 'object' and SendValue() is able to extract or modify any information that it needs by using the 'value' property of any form fields it wishes to use.

All I've done in the example code is to convert the input text to uppercase using the string object's toUpperCase() method subsequently submitting the form using a submit() method. Of course, had more extensive processing been required, I could have chosen to first copy the contents of the text box into a separate variable using this sort of code...

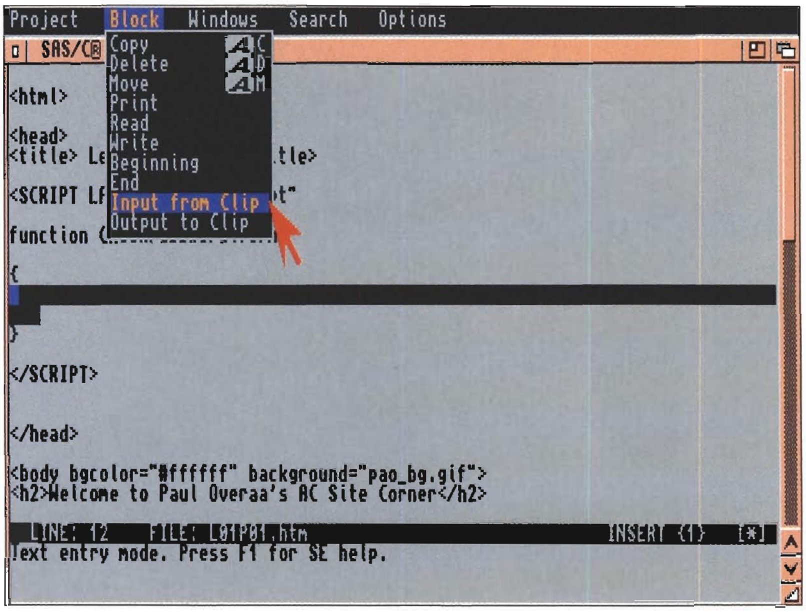
```
var input_value=form.data.value;
```

which, in this case, would have stored the text field value in a local variable called input_value. If I'd then wanted to check this item against some specified value a conditional test of this nature could have been used...

```
if(input_value==??)
{
        // do something
}
```

Get the idea? And, having performed any required conversions or checks, the new value could then have been re-inserted into the form like this...

```
form.data.value=input_value; /* value now
modified! */
And That's Just For Starters
```



Javascript code can be added to a Web page using any conventional ASCII text editor

I've barely been able to touch the surface of Javascript in this introduction and there's much more to be said. Javascript also caters for loops etc., and provides things like a built-in Date object which has methods (functions) for all commonly needed time/date conversions. Then there are user interface methods which allow alert boxes, message box prompts and so on to be displayed, and even a good selection of maths routines including trig functions.

Rest assured that, now the appearance of a Javascript enabled Amiga browser is imminent, more detailed tutorials will be coming. For now, however, the big question is which browser will win the race? It certainly looks at present as though iBrowse will be first past the post, but doubtless others browsers will rapidly follow suit and make no mistake – this latest browser direction can only be good for the Amiga platform in general. Needless to say it also provides quite a boost for the loyal band of Amiga users who, given the difficulties encountered over the last couple of years, are long overdue for some good news!

THE JAVA CONNECTION

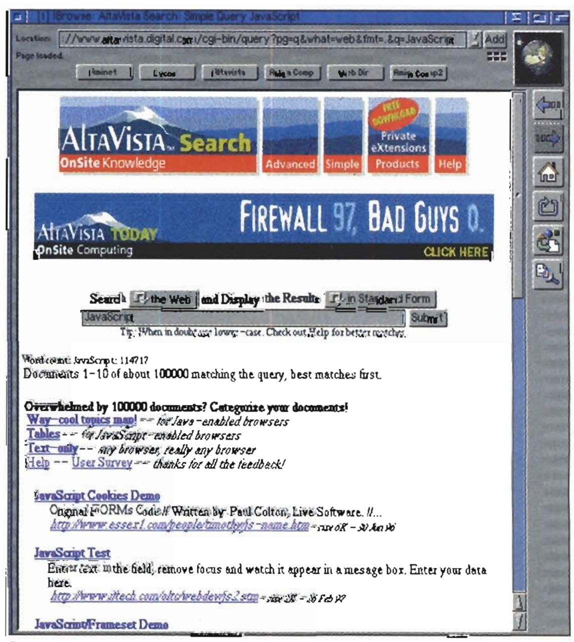
In case you're in any doubt, let's get one thing clear – Javascript and Java are NOT the same. Java is a full featured object-oriented programming language that has some resemblance to C++. It's a compiled language but, since it has been designed to be platform independent, programs end up as a series of machine independent files containing so-called Java byte codes. On the target machine a Java byte code interpreter, often provided as part and parcel of a browser, then executes the equivalent code for the processor in question.

In this way programmers can, among other things, write 'Applets', mini-applications programs that can be downloaded from a Web site and executed by a Java-supporting browser 'on-the fly'. This opens up possibilities for some fairly amazing graphics/animation effects and so on with, again, the key issues being firstly the fact that the applet is portable and secondly that, once downloaded, these graphics effects are being produced without the need of further server-client control interaction since the applet is then running on the client machine just like any other application!

Java, most notably in the form of Haage & Partner's MERAPI project, is also coming to the Amiga. However, the stumbling block for Amiga coders in general is that C, rather than C++, has been the mainstream language for program development and moving from C to Java is going to carry with it a fairly hefty learning curve. Despite some common ground between the syntax of C and Java the object oriented nature of Java means that many Amiga programmers are going to have to come to terms with a whole new programming philosophy and this will take time.

In the main, coders on other platforms have been slightly better prepared for this change. Many PC coders for example were already familiar with object oriented coding from things like the Microsoft Foundation Class libraries (MFC) which are used with Visual C++ to provide a class-based interface to the Window's API (applications programming interface) so the transition from C++ to Java was smooth.

Most Amiga users will not have such an advantage but the fact remains that, as with the easier to learn Javascript, there are going to be enormous long term benefits to be had by coming to terms with Java. And with that sort of incentive there's no doubt at all that a large percentage of the Amiga coding community will be jumping on both the Javascript and the Java bandwagons!



Search engines like AltaVista can give direct access to vast amounts of Web-based Javascript information

Aminet's Father

Jason Jordache chats to Aminet supremo Urban D Mueller

A software archive stashed on a borrowed 25MHz 030 computer with 50Mb of hard drive space available for uploads. This was the beginning of Aminet, the seeds of which are rooted far away in deepest Switzerland.

The reason this small-time project didn't fizzle out? As Urban, the guy behind Aminet says, "The secret is that it's not just any archive, but an Amiga archive, and Amiga users are unlike the users of any other computer in the world. In fact it is the user community that keeps the Amiga alive and kicking now that it has lost the technological lead it once had. It was the user community that made that tiny little archive one of the biggest success stories on the history of the Internet."

The original archive started out with 40 visits per day, enough to impress Urban to write the .readme collector program, and the one thing that still separates the Aminet network from any other. Nowadays, spread over some 30 mirror sites, the main archives are taking visits and uploads way up on previous counts. We asked him what he has been up to these days.

JJ: "How much of your day goes into maintaining Aminet? What kind of things do you get up to?"
UM: "Today, my work consists of checking and adding uploads, keeping services running, answering mail and writing administration software. The first three involve between one and three hours a day, all year long. Writing admin software can be zero for long times, but sometimes it is a full day's job. Whenever I am making a new CD, I'm really working 100 per cent on Aminet. Since there have been a lot of CDs lately, I don't seem to have much time for anything else."

"My big project at the moment is a single big mirror administration program that everyone can install very, very easily. This would enable you to have your own personal Aminet copy within minutes and never have to touch it again. When I install it on the main site will, it will work on the mirror sites as well (this is not the case yet and that kept me from installing many services I wanted to). This exists and works in my upcoming mods archive, but is not yet powerful enough for all the features that Aminet offers."

"Of course I'm not alone. We have 120 people on the Aminet administrators mailing list! Of these, only Matthias Scheler does work on the main site, while most of the others are mirror admins and don't have to do anything unless something goes wrong."

JJ: "We all want to know what the D stands for in Urban D. Mueller."
UM: "Dominik. Probably the only part of my name you don't mispronounce."

JJ: "How is your name spelt phonetically? Here, let me have a go first: Err-ban Mulelar."
UM: "oo-r-bah-n m-xx-ll-er
oo=tool bah=heart xx=not known in English."

JJ: "I've recently been sending bag loads of my work to my dir on Aminet. Do I get a free CD?"
UM: "Yep, like everyone. Under the current policy, everyone who provides his e-mail address in the Author field of his .readme files is sent a mail with instructions when the CD comes out. You do have to pay for the shipping though."

"Single Aminet CDs come out every two months, only Aminet CD 15 was an exception; it went between Aminet 14 and Aminet 16 so we had three disks within three months."

JJ: "What are your plans, Internet and CD wise, for Aminet over the next few months?"
UM: "The content of Aminet, as you'll surely agree, could hardly be much better; we simply get everything that's out there. The presentation, however, needs to be improved, especially in the WWW version. The reason I haven't done so a long time ago is simple – 40 mirrors. I cannot ask 40 mirror admins to install complicated programs to maintain the WWW interface and answer queries. On the other hand, if I install them only on the main site, the whole concept of mirroring is quite useless."

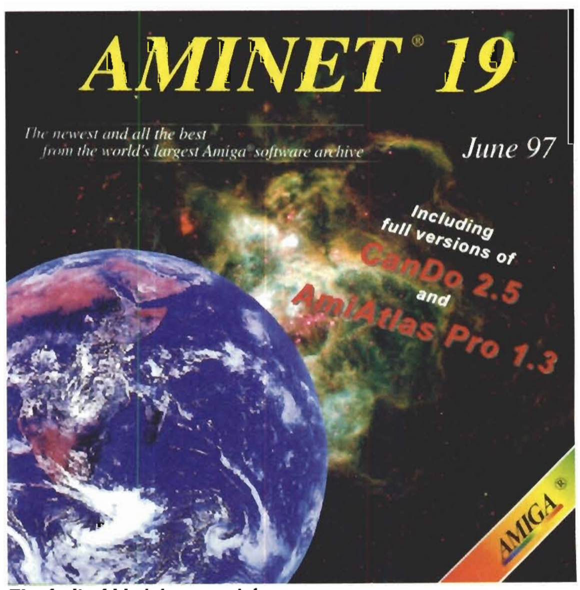
"I therefore took the all or nothing approach. I'm working on a single easy-to-install program that completely manages an Aminet mirror and all the associated services. This program is already in use (Javarc, see below) but not powerful enough to handle Aminet. As soon as that happens, though, you can expect to see more mirrors (you can even run it on your own Amiga) and better mirrors (many WWW improvements are planned)."

JJ: "Will you ever produce a DVD-Aminet Set with the whole Aminet?"
UM: "It might happen, but not in the near future. Also, as far as I know, only single layer DVDs are currently available, but the whole Aminet is so big it needs a four layer DVD."

JJ: "What about your other 'archive' initiative, Javarc (www.javarc.org)?
UM: Javarc is only an archive of postings made to the newsgroup comp.lang.java.announce which I moderate. It's new and small, so it was a good test for starting an archive from scratch, which is what my new mirror program is doing. Also, I'm very interested in Java."

"Currently in the making is a third project. I was never satisfied with the presentation of mods on Aminet, a specialised archive can do better. And that's what I'm building right now. By the time your readers see this, there should be already something quite nice, have a look at http://sunsite.doc.ic.ac.uk/media/audio/mods"

JJ: "When can we expect to see the first Javarc CD-Rom?
UM: I'd love to have the time to compile



The fruit of his loins, erm labour

one, since playing with Java applets often is a test of patience, but unfortunately I don't get around to it."

JJ: "What do you think of ProDAD, PIOS and Phase-5 projects?"
UM: "I haven't personally seen any of those yet, but anything that injects new technology in the Amiga is good."

JJ: "What are your feelings towards the Amiga's situation?
UM: The worst that could happen to it has already happened, and the Amigans are quite unimpressed. The Amiga, with a little help from Aminet, is self-sustaining."

JJ: "A future of nanotechnology, cloning and true machine intelligence. Where would the Amiga stand in all of this? A relic of bygone ages, a memorable dust collecting trophy from the good old days? I envisage a world of computers which have the structure of VCRs in the sense that they can all do the same things, but instead of talking in terms of Amigas and Macs, we talk in terms of brand names like Hitachi, Deccacolour, Sony and so on."

"You could run Workbench if you wanted to, but you could just as easily run a plethora of Mac or PC titles for what it's worth. You'd have the best that every current make of computer has to offer, melded into a box we'd probably refer to as the Personal Computer, PC for short. You could stick an Amiga logo on the box, but at its heart it would have the killer feature quirks of any platform."

UM: "What we all like about the Amiga is using it. Not the fact that there is an MC680x0 in there and the expansion slots use the ZORRO standard. Therefore, we don't want to be tied to any hardware platform, the OS should be platform independent."

"But how come all platform independent OSs have failed so far? The reason is that the software for those OSs was not platform independent as well, so people will continue to choose the platform they get the most software for."

"Java software is an example for platform independent software, but not a very good one. It's just software written for one very simple, imaginary CPU. If you want to run that on a different CPU, you have to either emulate the Java CPU or analyse the code and recompile it. (Check guavac and kaffe on Aminet for Java interpreters.)"

"The real way to do it is faster and better and no major OS has it yet. The trick is very easy: Today's software is generated in several steps from source code by a compiler. The compiler has its own, structured representation of the program, and only in the end it will create code from that. All you have to do now is store whatever you had just before generating code as the program and make the code generator part of the OS. This is not hard at all and doesn't slow down program loading much either."

"If, as described, the Amiga software manages to detach itself from the current outdated hardware and hop to any, then the Amiga feeling has a very bright future."





The man himself showing off his equipment

Name:	**Urban D. Mueller**
Age:	**27**
Interests:	**Amiga (duh), archive administration, juggling, cinema (collecting laser disks).**
Computer setup:	**A4000/040/40MHz, 2x2G HD, 44M mem, Philips CD-Writer, HP DAT, Ethernet**

FROM LITTLE ACORNS

Urban took over the small computer based archive that was to become Aminet from the local students club way back in January '92. Here's the early evolution of Aminet in his own words.

"The archive ran on a computer donated by Commodore Switzerland. I saw that 40 users logged in per day. I was impressed. Hey, that was happening unnoticed while we were using that computer for mail, news and FTP. But hell, 40 users a day are 280 per week, that's quite an audience."

"The .readme collector generated the RECENT and SHORT file every night. And amazingly, many uploaders took the extra work of writing the special readme files needed to generate those file lists. Slowly, the site started getting popular. Then, in April, came the ab20 shutdown. People were desperate to get a replacement, and many turned to amiga.physik. Too many in fact. We had to install a user limit. And 50Mb of disk space may have been appropriate for a small unknown site in Switzerland, but for taking over all traffic the job from the 250Mb ab20 which had ruled Amiga FTP before?"

"This could have been the quick death of a promising archive since the majority of users would have had to use another. But not on the Amiga. I asked my friends on the #amiga channel of IRC whether they had the resources to run a mirror of our site. One of the, Peter Sjostrom, had. 1 May 1992 was the moment when amiga.physik became Aminet – a collection of interconnected FTP sites. I wrote some mirroring scripts that allowed very frequent updates and forwarded uploads made to his site in Sweden, making the two sites nearly equivalent.

"This helped with our bandwidth problem, but the hard disk space was still too small; we had to throw away files all the time to make room for new ones. We had no money for a bigger disk. But we had the user community. I placed a message in the login text and, within a month, we had enough cash for a 1.5Gb hard disk which Mike Schwartz obtained cheaply for us in the USA. Half of that money came from Walnut Creek Inc., the company that had made the ab20 CD-Rom. Quite a courageous step back then, nobody knew what would become of Aminet."

"Still, far more people wanted to log into amiga.physik than could, but more and more people started mirroring our site, even if they only could afford to keep the most recent 50Mb on-line. That finally brought Aminet on the road to success. More downloads created more uploads, which created more downloads and so on. Breakthrough.

"With the increased number of uploads my workload got bigger and bigger, but I got help from Chris Schneider when I needed it. Aminet started running smoothly for quite a while. Then came the catastrophe. Because of the significant traffic our site alone created, we were ordered by the university to shut down the archive at amiga.physik in June '93. Fortunately, Chris Myers from wuarchive offered me an account and enough disk space so I could move the Aminet main site there. Isn't the Net a wonderful thing? Now we can easily administer an archive 6000 miles away from our home country."

"The A3000UX that used to be amiga.physik found a new home at EUnet, where it is now available to the general public again, but only as a mirror this time."

Back issues

UK only

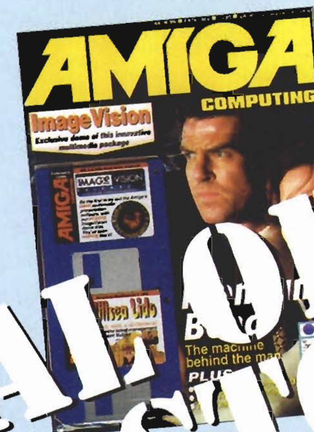
Missed an issue of Amiga Computing?

Do not fear! Simply fill in the coupon and one will be winging its way to your doorstep!

SPECIAL OFFER WHILE STOCKS LAST 1996 ISSUES ONLY £1



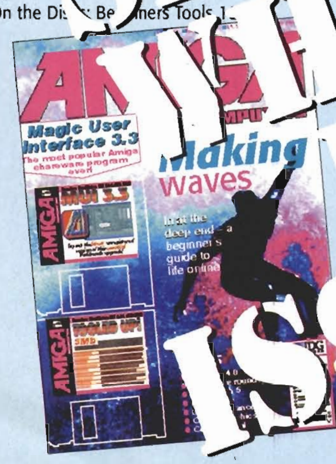
Issue 95 – ... 1996
A look at the future of the Amiga, the ... hos-pitals, ... suit ... Magic User Interface ... Lightwave CD ...
On the Disks: Beginners Tools 1 ...



Issue 96 – February 1996
... role in the ... movie ... Cinema 4D, ... Amiga at a ... for kids
On the Disks: Image Vision/Hill ... ido



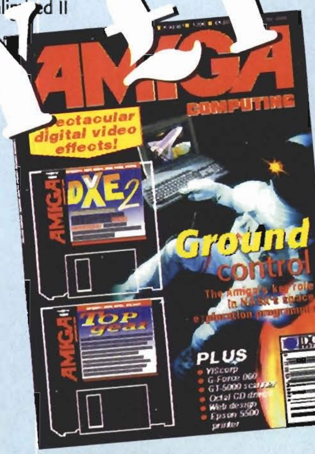
Issue 98 – April 1996
Making Movies – your guide to Amiga desk-top video, Final Data, Ethernet Special, Digital Quill
On the Disks: ... Punishment, Utilities Unlimited II



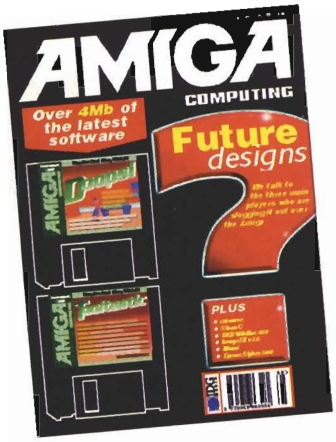
Issue 99 – May 1996
Beginners Guide to what's on the Net, Hard Drive Round-Up, Modeller 4.0
On the Disks: MUI 3.3, Tooled Up!



Issue 100 – June 1996
Build your own Amiga sound studio, 100 Issue Birthday Celebrations, Modem Round-Up
On the Disks: Storm C

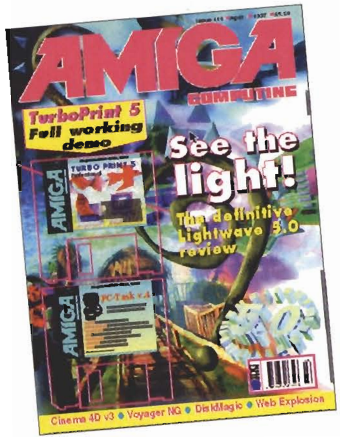


Issue 102 – August 1996
Exclusive - NASA uses the Amiga to explore space VIScorp, Espon GT-5000, G-Force 060, 8 speed CDs
On the Disks: DXE 2 demo, Top Gear Utilities



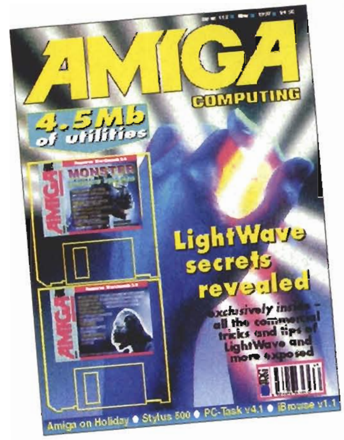
Issue 105 – November 1996

Future Designs - the main player's plans for the Amiga, IBrowse, Storm C, Image FX 2.6, DKB Wildfire 060
On the Disks: Doopsi/ToolTastic



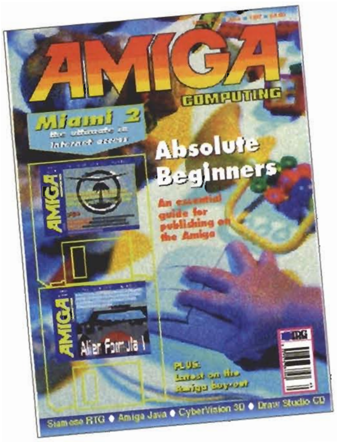
Issue 111 – April 1997

LightWave 5, Cinema 4D v3, Voyager NG, Disk Magic, Web explosion
On the Disks:TurboPrint 5, PC-Task 4



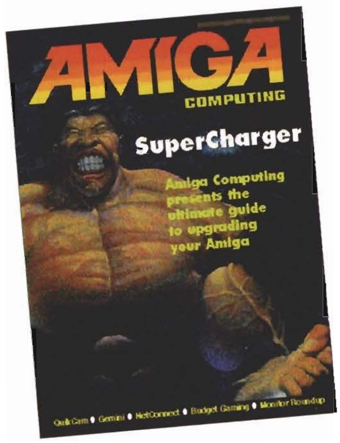
Issue 112 – May 1997

Making money with LightWave and your Amiga. Amiga on Holiday, Epson Stylus 500, PC Task v4.1
On the Disks: Monster Utilities Special



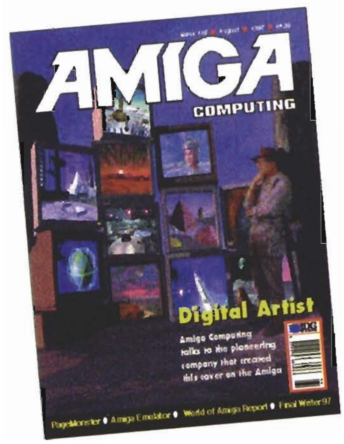
Issue 113 – June 1997

Beginners guide to DTP with your Amiga, Siamese RTG, Java and the Amiga, Cybervision 3D, Gateway
On the Disks: Miami 2k and Alien F1



Issue 114 – July 1997

Super Charge your Amiga, QuikCam, NetConnect, Gemini system, Budget monitors
On the Disk: AHI system and tools



Issue 115 – August 1997

Digital Artist, Final Writer97, Page Monster, Unix Amiga Emulator, World of Amiga Show report
On the Disk: Animate, BarNone, DiskSpeed...

Back issues order Form

Simply send a cheque or postal order for just £4.50 made payable to IDG Media.
The magic address is Amiga Computing Back Issues, IDG Media, Media House, Adlington Park, Macclesfield, SK10 4NP.

Please allow up to 28 days for delivery.

❑ Issue 95 - January 1996	**£1.00**	❑ Issue 100 - June 1996	**£1.00**	❑ Issue 112 - May 1997	**£4.50**
❑ Issue 96 - February 1996	**£1.00**	❑ Issue 102 - August 1996	**£1.00**	❑ Issue 113 - June 1997	**£4.50**
❑ Issue 98 - April 1996	**£1.00**	❑ Issue 105 - November 1996	**£1.00**	❑ Issue 114 - July 1997	**£4.50**
❑ Issue 99 - May 1996	**£1.00**	❑ Issue 111 - April 1997	**£4.50**	❑ Issue 115 - August 1997	**£4.50**

Name ______________________________

Address ______________________________

____

______________________________ Post code ______________

Tel ______________________________

☐ *Please tick if you do not wish to receive further information or special offers.*

It doesn't look good doctor – weak pulse, pale face, but hopefully it will pull through

GREETINGS FROM NORWAY

I'm writing to complain about software companies who seem to do everything to kill the Amiga market. I have nothing against OCS/ECS games that run in 1Mb, but when they refuse to work on my A4000/040 I get very annoyed!

When I pay about £30 for a new game, I want to play the thing and I want it to run from the hard drive, at least work with 10-20Mb of ram and a 040/060. If a game will require more than the basic 1Mb Amiga to make it look as good as it should, simply don't release it for 1Mb Amigas!

By all means make a cut down version, but don't punish those who have saved up for a high end Amiga by making us wait for an upgraded version or having to run a bad looking 16 colour game that won't even run from hard drive.

Domark is a prime example of how a company can misunderstand the Amiga market horribly. First it announces its mega hit Championship Manager 2 for the Amiga. Great! Then it gets delayed and delayed and delayed again, for stupid reasons. It is working to make it run from a A500 1Mb with no hard drive!

The game could have been finished ages ago if it didn't do this. It would have sold very well even though it needed an A1200 HD, maybe even with some extra memory (I know plenty of people who wouldn't hesitate in buying a new Amiga if they could get such a game – they want to retain the excellent OS and applications, but also want to have PC quality games).

The short development time would certainly have saved enough money for Domark to recoup lost sales from A500 users. Recently Domark wanted beta testers for the game, and a lot of interested people sent e-mails saying they were interested. What happened? Nothing. Absolutely nothing. I've attempted numerous times to reach the company, but it seems to filter out all e-mails with the word 'Amiga' in, or just ignore them completely.

I don't mind Mutation Software releasing 1Mb games – its games suit such machines well. But even Domark should understand that you cannot get CM2 to run from 880kb floppies unless you remove a lot from the PC version! I won't buy a game that looks a lot worse on the Amiga than on the PC – if it's released after the PC version, some improvements and player suggestions should be added instead of doing that silly 'down-grading' for the Amiga version.

Have a look at Click Boom's Myst to see how things should be done – it will actually add a 24 bit colour mode to the game, and I expect that it will be just a good as the PC version. Until the companies who make lame PC ports do something with their thoughts about the Amiga being a 7MHz, 1Mb, ZX Spectrum-like computer, I (and many others) won't even consider buying their games.

They have to realise that the Amiga has moved on since 1990. Instead I'm looking forward to Genetic Species, Hellpigs, Myst, Phoenix, Forgotten Forever, Trapped 2 and Flyin' High.

Even Underlid, evunder@sn.no

I know exactly what Domark would say to you, and that is, to get a reasonable return on its investment, it has to target as large a user base as possible. This simply means it sells to the lowest common denominator, A500 owners, no offence intended if we have any A500 readers.

Domark was going about the program development as though it were writing the game five years ago, as it is uninterested in the Amiga market anymore. Compare this to Click Boom's and Vulcan's attitude where they have made a conscious decision to move to CD development as it allows so much more freedom when developing games.

WRITE IN!

If you have something you need to get off your chest then put pen to paper and write to ESP, Amiga Computing, Media House, Adlington Park, Macclesfield, SK10 4NP. You can also Email us at ESP@acomp.demon.co.uk We have various software bundles to give away for the best letters. We do try to reply to all Emails and letters, but at busy periods this is sometimes not possible so please bear with us

DINOSAURS

Hasn't anyone told you the Amiga is dead? "Only the Amiga makes it possible!" – never was a more stupid and childish phrase ever spoken! Actually only the Amiga makes it impossible to access the oceans of free software available on the Internet!

You say Gateway bought the Amiga because of its advanced technology – are you trying to make us laugh? Any bottom-of-the-range PC has 24 bit colour, which the Amiga never had, unless of course you by a special expensive graphics card which ruins compatibility.

If you just want to play Amiga games you can use one of the software emulators, UAE or Fellow. So, why don't you grow up and start using real computers?

Filipe Alves, filipe.alves@mail.telepac.pt

Hey? What orifice are you talking out of? I think the news of the Amiga's demise has been greatly exaggerated, it has been having more of a bad bout of flu lately, but Gateway 2000 should provide the antidote.

Hmmm, actually I think you'll find the Amiga is perfectly apt at accessing the Internet, and you don't have to mess around creating your own log on script as with Windows. And adding a 24 bit card to your Amiga makes any well written program run better.

Now, if you don't mind, please take your small minded attitude elsewhere, I have more important things to do, such as tiddlywinks.

YIPEE, POWER PC!

I think I'm the last Amiga user in Venezuela. I still have my old A500. My big shock was on 28 May when I read about the Gateway purchase of the Amiga. This is a good step for the Amiga and I think it is near to being re-launched as a multimedia/Internet platform with PowerPC.

The basic problem, I guess, is that Amiga users make up less than 3 per cent of all computer users and this makes a big influence in the software producers and hardware developers. Let's see if, in the next three months, Gateway can do anything about that.

Gualberto J. Briceo, Caracas, Venezuela. gba@Etheron.net

You may very well be the last Amiga users in Venezuela, but not in the whole of South America as we have had e-mails from Brazilian users. So there must be a few Amigas left over there.

I think all we can do is hope the Gateway buy-out is a good thing. Personally I have little doubt that Gateway will allow the Amiga to develop in the right way – that is, end up with a PowerPC Amiga, though that may be towards the end of next year. Really, the best advice I can give is just to wait and see.

The number of active Amiga users in the world will not even add up to a single per cent of computer users. I think the total number of Macintosh users almost makes it to the three per cent mark. So from that you can see the overwhelming number of PC users. As for your English, it's better than a lot of people that write in to us.

AMIGA SPREASHEETS

Spreadsheets continue to be an Amiga market weakness, both the software and the reviews. I am a structural engineer (a true oddity in the Amiga domain) and make heavy use of spreadsheets. In my opinion, there has yet to be a review from any Amiga magazine that addresses and compares the important features. All reviewers overlook at least one major flaw/eccentricity of the reviewed program.

I would really like to see a review comparing the features of the major programs available, such as: computational control (iteration, min-recalculation, auto/manual), built-in functions, movement/editing conventions (i.e. similar to/different from other programs), printing (ASCII, preferences, other), file import/export compatibility and limitations, speed (computation, printing), formatting (alignment, orientation, text/numeric formats), font handling graphs (types, options, integrated into spreadsheets), drawing (borders, shading, image importing), row/column control (height, width, outlining, hiding), ARexx functions and interface control.

Good reviews might have saved me from finding out the hard (and expensive) way that some spreadsheets were not adequate. The quest continues .

John Clenance, JCC@iname.com

Cripes, looks like you ask a little more from your spreadsheet than the average user who may be content with straight forward sum and divide functions. There are a number of good reasons why there has never been such an in-depth round up. Firstly, there are very few spreadsheets around, the only two I can think of off the top of my head are TurboCalc 4 and FinalData. TurboCalc is by far the more powerful and would be the one I would recommend for yourself as it does fill most of the criteria you have said above.

I would add there are very few people that need such an in-depth comparison, as they are more likely to need a spreadsheet to do their accounts or the like.

CHECK IT OUT!

Want a chuckle? Just check out your competitor's (Future Net) Home page and try to follow a couple of links! Perhaps Paul could offer them a little assistance in the line of patriotic defence. Mustn't let the old country down eh?

Seriously though, it is a good example of what happens when you try to become all things to all people. Either stick to one platform or make doubly sure your home page can be navigated by all browsers. Nothing is more annoying than wasting time and money chasing around in what seems an endless loop.

diz@amitar.com.au

Ooh we can't print a letter slagging off the opposition... oh stuff it, go on then. The Future Net site did seem to have a few teething troubles, including no Amiga support, but they seem to have been smoothed out now. Anyway that's what you get for spending something like a million pounds!

STAYING ALIVE

Thank you for giving us such a opportunity to talk about our common hobby. I have been an Amiga user since the '80s, and I remember back then everybody talked about computers. I decided to buy one and, after a lot of research and talking to people who understood the computers and the market, I finally decided to get an 80286.

The sales manager in the computer shop (who was extremely friendly) told me that the 80286 was a fine tool but they are just a thing, then he showed me an Amiga and continued to say that these machines were created by imaginative people for imaginative users and the system was a truly original design. Great, I saw the performance and got my first Amiga.

That was then and, year after year, I have witnessed the developing software and hardware. There were huge libraries of the so called PD and the Amiga community got bigger and bigger and people actually used their imagination and so on. Now they are really disappointing me! Especially those software houses that are copying everything from the PC market.

We are not talking about originality or imagination anymore, why? If Commodore, Escom and VIScorp failed, it doesn't mean the community is dead.

Amiga is just a name, we are talking about community and the reason the Amiga still exists. It is great fun to find that Mr Nobody became somebody because of his/her limitless imagination with the help of tools like the Amiga. That's why the Amiga became the Amiga – tools for expanding someone's horizon.

Every machine has its limit and the Amiga is no exception. Year after year of hard development gave us the A1200 and A4000 (and they are real beauties), and then we went from AGA to Cybergraphix.

I personally own both machines and use them everyday in every opportunity; just for fun, to make things, for 3-D modelling and DTP applications and, of course, expanding both my imagination and machine's configuration. I love to do that and continue to do so, whatever the new owner decides and at any cost.

I just wanted to tell Amiga users, both old and new, that what ever happens next, please do not allow the community to stand still and die. Some of you may want Billy the goat machines and that's fine by me, but please do not destroy the soul of our community by following the PC's market.

We don't want Doom like things. We want original and rich beautiful things. It doesn't matter what you do or what you make, just have an original idea. That's what the Amiga was created for. To people who use the Electronic Highway, my invisible IRC friends, please keep the channel alive by logging on often and make something really special out of it, because there is a very special soul living there.

zahedi@online.no, NORWAY

Well it does sound like you are very committed to the Amiga, keep it up and one day it should pay off.

Laser Guidance

by **Hugh Poynton**

HIDDEN TRUTH

We mentioned something about this CD a few months ago – unfortunately we reviewed it when it wasn't quite finished – sorry Sadeness!

The Hidden Truth is an interactive exploration of the world of the strange. The CD contains absolutely loads of information on the paranormal. Information ranges from the weird and wacky (photographs of UFOs that look suspiciously like pieces of cardboard and tracks entitled My Ghost Friends) to the suprisingly level headed articles written about US Airforce Top Secret projects (the most frightening of which concern Mach 8 reconnaissance planes that actually bleed their fuel from tiny holes in their fuselage so the engine is, effectively, outside the airplane).

Unlike Epic's similar paranormal CD, The Hidden Truth is very Web influenced – the content being pertinent information scooped off the Web and put on the CD. The plus side of this approach is that the information is disparate in nature. You might find humorous information right next to dead serious tracts.

If you want to read how the Germans and Japanese had secret bases on the moon during the war, buy this CD. For anybody with even a passing X-Files interest, this CD is a must have.





Bottom line

PRODUCT DETAILS	
Product	The Hidden Truth
Supplier	Sadeness Software
Price	£29.95
Tel	01263 722169
SCORES	
Ease of use	**90%**
Implementation	**90%**
Value For Money	**90%**
Overall	**90%**

THE AGA EXPERIENCE 3

A good mix of games, piccies, demos and the odd serious application is featured on this disk. Much of the stuff is pretty odd, however. Although there is a lot of crap present there are also quite a few diamonds. Capital Punishment, ClickBOOM's beat 'em-up is included, as is Flyin' High, Islona's forthcoming street racer. If you tire of these two, have a spin on Paulo Catini's excellent Alien F1 GP.



Air combat, one off many animations on this CD

There's also a fair amount of clip art and animation. As seems to be customary for CDs such as these, there's a selection of Eric Schwartz stuff, weird cartoons and computerised graffiti and the like. Strangest of all there is a slide show of Yoko Ono images. I am now of the opinion that there is only one thing worse than a photo of Yoko Ono and that is lots of photographs of Yoko Ono...

There are a few slide shows; Dreams, a slide show from a load of Aussie coders seems to be a compilation of Athena images of sultry looking women and blokes with chiselled features. (I always wondered what the people in Athena images were doing to be so damn serious all the time. You could imagine it – Jane and John the Athena models get together on their free afternoons to stand hugging each other, staring into the distance.)

Like Aminet 19, AGA is a useful and interesting compilation of disparate and probably quite useless software. The attraction could be likened to rooting through a junk shop – you search about and see if you can find something that appeals.

Bottom line

PRODUCT DETAILS	
Product	AGA Experience Volume 3
Supplier	Sadeness Software
Price	£14.95
Tel	01263 722169
SCORES	
Ease of use	**88%**
Implementation	**85%**
Value For Money	**84%**
Overall	**86%**

Building a picture

Finally, the Amiga has a package that can claim to stand up to the likes of Photoshop – well, almost

Almost a year ago, Haarge and Partner released the first version of a brand new Amiga art package, ArtEffect. A new company releasing a completely new package was, in itself, quite amazing considering the state of the Amiga at the time. The quality of this first release was equally staggering.

The claim that it was Photoshop for the Amiga was going a little far, but you could see that all the necessary building blocks were there, and this was a really good true colour paint package available for Amiga users.

What's new

One of the biggest problems the original version of ArtEffect suffered from was the lack of any tools to combine pictures. Most other Amiga paint packages or image processors at least give you an alpha channel. In its crudest form this allows you to combine two images. With Photogenics this was made very easy thanks to its interface and easy to use tools.

This has now been corrected with the introduction of ArtEffect layers. Anyone that has seen or used Photoshop should recognise these straight away as they are used and presented in ArtEffect in an almost identical manner.

Layers essentially allow images to be placed on top of each other. This in itself would not be very useful but 'transparent' areas can be drawn onto images allowing you to 'see through' to lower images. As you can image, this allows complex image combination over many different images.

As part of the layers system, you can select exactly which layers you want to make visible and which you want to keep hidden. This makes it easier to touch up a specific part of an image, as unnecessary layers can be hidden from view.

One problem with the previous version of ArtEffect was that it was a little memory hungry, and this one has got that little bit greedier. So far I haven't been able to run it on a 6Mb machine (2Mb chip, 4Mb fast) and the minimum specification is 6Mb of pure fast ram.

Fortunately, to help people make the most of the new layer system, ArtEffect now has spanky new virtual memory. This, in theory, should allow you to have as many pictures and layers open as you like. Despite this, I have still had problems loading very large pictures. This could be a chip memory problem, however, and I would suspect graphic card users will not suffer with this problem.

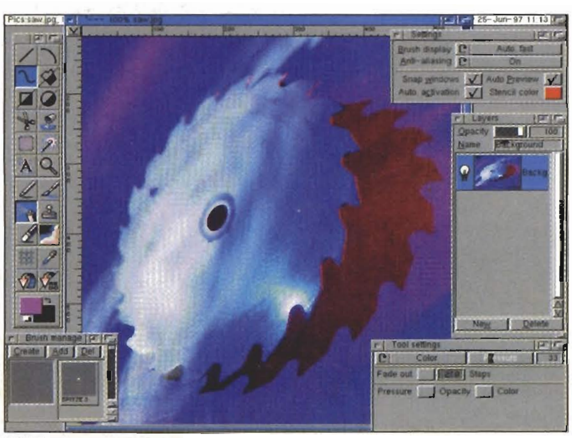
This new version also seems a lot faster. It may not be but, running at 64 colours just on an AGA machine, ArtEffect was very responsive. When using small brushes it whips along, but with large brushes (70 pixels) it does start to crawl. Again, graphic card users should not suffer as much. There seems to be theme here, get a graphics card if you want the best out of ArtEffect and your Amiga.

Another welcome addition is something that Photoshop has only just got – variable undo levels. The original only had a single level of undo, this new version can now be configured to have up to nine or an infinite buffer. Obviously this will slow down ArtEffect as it will resort to storing past changes to your hard drive, but you can draw away to your hearts content and not worry about cocking your picture up.

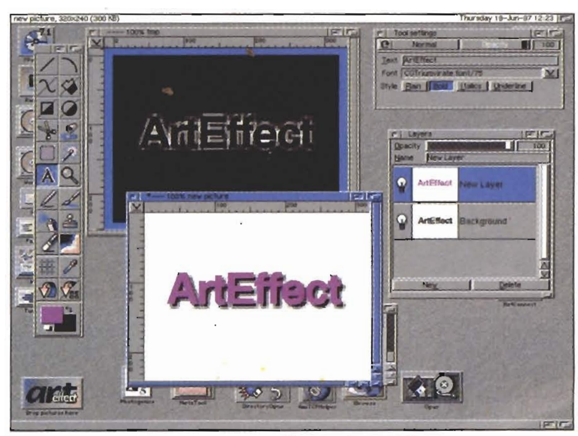
Haarge and Partner should also be congratulated on the great text handling that ArtEffect has. This was in the first version, but I never really appreciated how easy it was to use.

One particular thing I was hoping for in the first version of ArtEffect was a good gaussian blur filter. No package seems to fulfil this requirement, and even this latest version still has the two fixed blur levels. A decent gaussian blur is one of the most regularly used filters on Photoshop as it can be used in many different situations, and it seems a real shame that this has still not been added.

ArtEffect version 2 is awesome. Even though this is a preview, I was actually looking at the final product and cannot really find anything at fault with this version. What I would warn people about, however, is this is resource hungry. On our 12Mb A4000 it runs relatively comfortably, but even so the AGA limitations are blatantly obvious. A Super72 screen (800x600) with 64 colours is not too bad, but it will never compare to a proper 24bit graphics card.



While Dan Winfield plays with his nice Picasso card, I have to struggle with old AGA, sob



A couple of really basic text effects show off layers and the sweet text handling of ArtEffect



The ACAS team have been drowning their sorrows with gin this month, so expect lots of spelling mistakes

MIDI MAN

Can You Help me? I have some *.mid samples but I can't get them to play. Also, is there anywhere I can get up-to-date .library files and tools?
C. Rutter, EEEFLAN@livjim.ac.uk

Aaah, those *.mid files are in fact MIDI files and not samples. You need to get hold an Amiga MIDI player. Unfortunately the best program on the Amiga is rather big, 6Mb to be precise. This is for all the samples to make the tunes sound much nicer. The program archive is called GMPlay13.lha and can be found on Aminet in the mus/midi directory. If you go for the slightly earlier version, GMPlay12.lha, it is only 1.4Mb so may easier to download.

Aminet has all the tools you would ever want and then some. You are best off using FTP and connecting to any of the Aminet sites in the world such as ftp.net-net.net or ftp.grolier.fr. There are also a number of WWW front ends such as http://harvest.tu-clausthal.de/AmiNET/

IT'S ALL SO QUIET

I have an A4000 with an Iomega Zip drive and a Toshiba internal SCSI 4x CD-Rom drive, both running from an Oktagon card. I have the CD sound working fine using the 3 pin audio port in the A4000 (by the audio outs) and everything is fine using CD players and CD32 emulators for games.

The CD audio output is so much quieter than the chip sounds and computer sound effects and this causes loads of problems with games and doing work while listening to CD music. Do you have any ideas to solve my problem and boost the CD sound without altering the computer sfx?
Chris Brown, erik@enterprise.net,
http://homepages.enterprise.net/erik/

Tricky this one and, to honest, I have not got a clue. The only thing I can suggest is that you get hold of an Audio CD player, one that has a volume control, and see if adjusting this affects the volume of the audio. A way to work around it would be to take the audio from the CD's headphone socket and play it out of some speakers or amp.

I'VE NO IDEA

Please can you help me with a problem that is driving me mad? It concerns the IDE interface in my A1200. At the moment I have an internal 2.5" Seagate drive in my A1200.

The problem is that when I connect another drive (brand new Western Digital 3.5" 2.1Gb Caviar) to the IDE connector (using a 44-40 way step-down board), the A1200 does not recognise it and the drive light is on all the time. HDToolBox and RDPrep do not recognise it.

I'm sure I have connected it correctly and have all the jumpers set as they should be. I even tried it with just the Caviar on its own and used HDToolBox and RDPrep from a floppy, but this still did not work.

The problem occurs with any drive I add (apart from the internal 2.5" Seagate) and I don't know what to do about it. Is my IDE connector faulty? If so, what can I do about it? I don't want to think that I've wasted my money on a new hard disk. Thanks for any help.
Monideth Pen, monideth@rhbnc.ac.uk

Odd one this. You should be able to daisy chain 2.5" and 3.5" drives together without any problem as they are still using the same interface protocol. As long as you have the correct master slave settings on the drive there should be no problem. The one possibility that does spring to mind is that the 3.5" inch drive is not being powered properly. How are you powering it?

If you have an external power supply there should be no problem, but if you are trying to use the Amiga's own (i.e. power it from the internal floppy supply), this could be where it's going wrong. This supply is usually good enough to power a single 3.5" drive, but if you have a fast accelerator such as one of the 040 boards around (particularly the 40MHz versions), then the original Amiga power supply cannot cope.

I have to say that I have never had any problem using an IDE drive with either my A1200 or the office A4000. You say the problem persists with any 3.5" drive you have tried – I would have to say that your A1200 interface just seems unable to use 3.5" drives which is very odd, and I would still be more inclined to blame the 3.5" drive.



All IDE drives should work with your A1200 and A4000

PRINTERS AGAIN

Can you give me any information on the Amiga printer driver for the HP DeskJet 560C? We've looked round Aminet and a few other places, including HP's own site (where they have no Amiga drivers at all), but couldn't find one. Does it use the 550C (which we've got) or is there a better one? Any help you can give us would be appreciated, thanks.

Paul Wootten, paw@pisle.com

You should know the situation; the Amiga, unfortunately, is not well supported by hardware manufacturers. So no, as far as I know there is no real 560C printer driver. However the 550C should work with no trouble at all.

What I do know is that if you have a Deskjet 600 or 400 type printer, you are advised to use the standard 500 printer driver. As I have said before the standard Amiga printer drivers leave a lot to be desired. Basic grey scale printing is not too bad, but colour print is abysmal. The only way to get good colour prints or up-to-date drivers is to buy either Studio II or TurboPrint.

OLD FOR NEW

Hi folks, can you tell me if it's still possible to find games like Police Quest, Space Quest and Eye Of The Beholder for the Amiga? I know they were available from Kixx XL, but I don't know if they are still going

Francisco Silva, jf@sti.com.br

Your only chance of getting hold of these games is from the Kixx range. The trouble is, these games have been out of production for so long that you are going to have a hard time picking them up from anywhere. If you want a decent adventure game why not hang on for Hell Pigs from Vulcan?

ARSEY AMITCP

Over the years I have acquired an amazing quantity of software of all kinds. With the benefit of experience it is usually possible to find which programme is giving hassle and eliminate it. Many of the things that try to get into one's WBStartup can be culprits, but sometimes I just cannot work out what is causing the problem.

Currently I am having terrible problems with my Net software. On one machine, AmiTCP, Voyager and Yam all happily run with no problems. But on my main machine, AmiTCP runs after a fashion (but with numerous strange messages I don't understand) – finally it says "Ignore all the fault messages you are on the Internet!". AmiPOP will not run at all – it keeps saying things like "No POP3 on this Port" and "An error has occurred" and most of the time Yam refuses to download mail. I really don't know where to begin to look – could you suggest some likely culprits ?

Ian Aisbitt, iana@zetnet.co.uk

I do have a very good list of possible culprits and it only has one entry, that being AmiTCP. You do not say what version you are using but I will assume it is version four. Even though it is simpler to set up than three, there are so many configuration files that affect it there is no easy way of tracking down problems, other than doing a full re-install. Remove the AmiTCP assigns from your user startup, reset your machine, delete the AmiTCP drawer and install again.

The best advice I can give other than that is to get hold of another TCP/IP package, Miami is very well supported and is very simple to get running. Another choice would be Net Connect that not only comes with TCP/IP software but a full suite of Internet software.

PRETENDERS TO THE CROWN

I'm a little confused about all these 'new' machines appearing. Just which is going to be the new Amiga? There are at least three machines now mentioned, one being the PIOS-1. I had a look at the specs for this computer and it seems to be similar to that of a PC. Looking at the other machines, the specs make it sound like a PC also. Isn't it really true that all the Amiga's OS, hardware, etc. have been abandoned? Aren't these 'Amiga compatible' computers really just hybrid PCs? And which should I buy?

The last thing I want to buy is some sort of weird PC hybrid! I, for one, would pay good money for any new Amiga – just so long as it really is an Amiga and not just yet another PC.

ljones, ljones@lineone.net

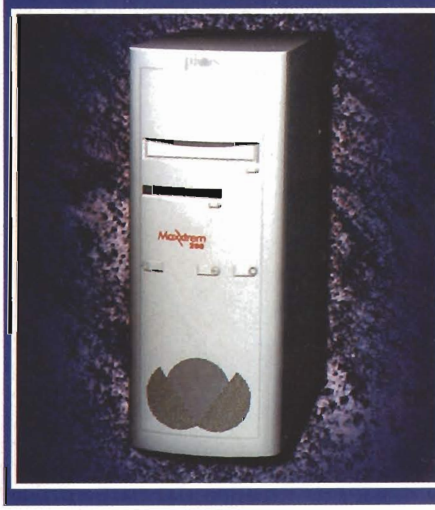
Recently there has been a whole load of pontificating about what exactly the Amiga is – to the point that people start spouting things like the 'philosophy' and 'spirit' of the Amiga. When the it was first released all those many years ago, it was something special. The fact of the matter is that there is never going to be another computer that will be as revolutionary as the Amiga was.

You have one camp that goes on about the custom chip set being the key and that it will never be possible to develop anything as revolutionary as the Amiga chipset was back then. Even the PlayStation is based on 1994 technology and that was developed by one of the largest electronics company in the world, with a large staff and budget.

At the end of the day, the Amiga is just another computer, more than that it is a tool. You run software on it, the hardware is really irrelevant. If you take this view then you are left with the Amiga operating system which, with the Gateway buy-out, will be developed and allowed to mature.

The point made at the World of Amiga show is that the OS will be made machine independent, so which ever machine you buy you will be able to run the Amiga OS and have an Amiga box. Just as if you got the BeOS you would have a BeBOX computer.

I think the PIOS machines are very interesting – you will be able to buy a Pentium beating machine for around £800. I also don't understand this PC hybrid problem? The A1200/4000 both use IDE drives does that make them a PC hybrid? Using PC parts cuts costs and reduces development time. The PIOS machine are a testament to this, their machines are almost ready to roll while Phase 5's more ambitious project will not see the light of day till we are well into the summer of 1998.



Will the PIOS machines really be able to replace the Amiga?

acas

Do you have a problem? Do you sometimes find yourself poised over your Amiga with axe in hand, spouting profanity at the stubborn refusal of your software or hardware to behave in the correct manner?

Well, calm down and swap the axe for pen and paper, jot down your problems, along with a description of your Amiga setup, and send it off to Amiga Computing Advice Service, IDG Media, Media House, Adlington Park, Macclesfield SK10 4NP. Alternatively you can e-mail us at ACAS@acomp.demon.co.uk

public sector

If you have an Internet connection, don't forget that the Public Sector Web site contains details of all the programs reviewed in these pages since issue 79 and is, in the words of our esteemed editor, "Absolutely lovely". To take a look, point your browser at http://www.dcus.demon.co.uk/sector/ sector.html, or follow the Software link from the Amiga Computing homepage.

Dave Cusick thinks fluffy dice spoil a car – but he's quite prepared to put up with traffic light air fresheners

GAME OF THE MONTH

Dynablaster Special Battle

Programmed by: Francois-Xavier Casseron
Available from: Classic Amiga Software
Disk No: G491

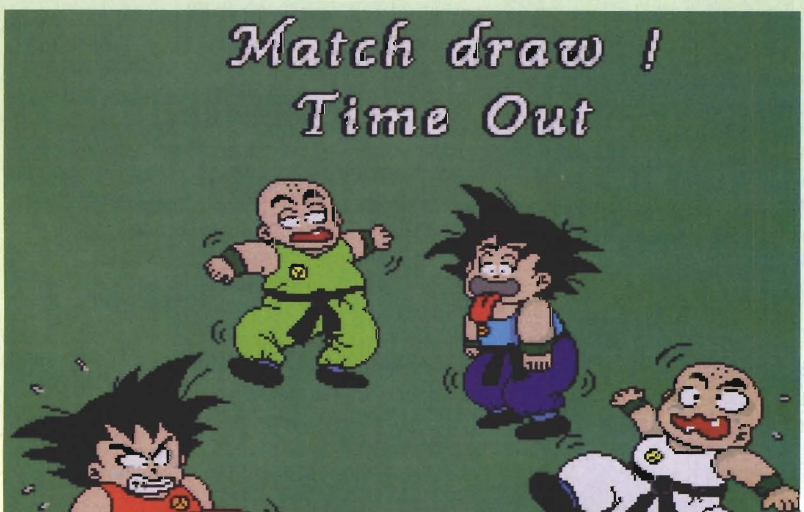
Dynablaster, also known as Bomberman, is without doubt one of the greatest games ever devised. During my first year at University, nightly trips to the local public house were invariably followed by lengthy Bomberman sessions on a flatmate's MegaDrive. Bed was simply not an option until you could claim to be able to see Bomberman mazes when you closed your eyes, and thus to the accompaniment of Pete's boxed set of Beatles CDs the die-hards of Flat D developed deadly dynablasting skills.

In the extremely unlikely event of you never having played Bomberman, or Dynablaster or any of its other clones, I shall briefly outline the gameplay. The objective of this multiplayer blast-fest is simply to be the last man standing. Opponents and on-screen obstacles can be destroyed by planting bombs which detonate after a few seconds, obliterating everything within range. The range of your blasts and the number of bombs you can plant simultaneously can be increased by collecting bonuses left behind when you blow up certain maze blocks.

Between two and four players can compete, controlling their characters using either joysticks or the keyboard, and the gameplay is every bit as slick and addictive as one would expect. From a presentational point of view, Dynablaster Special Battle is difficult to fault – the graphics are colourful and have a distinctly manga-esque feel at times, and there are three different pieces of in-game music as well as decent sound effects such as screams and explosions.



Dynablaster: This is how all computer games should be made



Before loading up Dynablaster it can be wise to take a few provisions into the room with you: food, blankets and beers should help sustain you and your friends for the necessary time

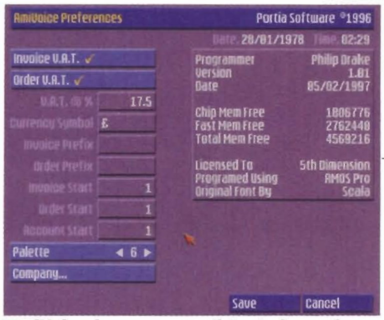
Dynablaster Special Battle is shareware, but it's incredibly reasonably priced. The author wants a minimum donation of just 20 French Francs (or alternately $6 or 8DM) for his efforts, meaning that this game provides exceptional amounts of entertainment per penny. A 1Mb machine is required to run it, and you'd also be advised to invite a few friends around and cancel any important engagements within the next six months.

AmiVoice 1.0

Programmed by: Portia Software
Available from:
5th Dimension Licenceware

This is a polished licenceware invoice and order form program which comes complete with a printed manual and sells for £9.99 plus 50p P&P. It requires Workbench 2, 2Mb RAM, a hard drive and obviously a printer.

Written in AMOS Pro and featuring an attractive interface with a highly legible Scala font, AmiVoice is powerful and pleasant to use. It allows you to create



AmiVoice is an accomplished piece of software brimming over with features

and maintain up to six databases; three for customers and invoices and three for suppliers and orders. Each database has one or two indices, and only the indices are loaded into memory so as to keep down the program's memory requirements. The sizes of the databases are really only limited by the available space on your hard drive.

As one would expect, AmiVoice takes things like VAT into account (the VAT rate can be set from the preferences screen). Other particularly useful features include the option of looking up a stock code from a list if you forget it, the storage of a broad range of payment details for invoice or order forms, and a Session Printing mode, which allows you to up to 250 invoices and print them out in one session rather than having to print each one individually - a particularly welcome facility for those using a single printer to print out both labels and invoice forms.

AmiVoice is a comprehensive yet affordable piece of business software, ideal for those operating on a reasonably small scale but looking for some powerful software that doesn't cost the earth.

Hideous

Programmed by: Mark Sheeky
Available from:
5th Dimension Licenceware
Disk No: FDG-018

Decent platformers are something of a rare arrival at Public Sector these days, so Hideous is particularly welcome. Set in some far-flung future, it pits one suitably armoured chappie with a gun attempting to fight his way through vast complexes populated by unpleasant and potentially lethal alien hordes.

With eerie, washed-out colour schemes, the various levels are atmospheric and well-drawn. Our hero dashes around the screen at a spritely and well-animated pace blasting spinning bubble things and reptilian aliens, and whilst the latter category of enemy are a trifle monochromatic and appear to be rooted to the spot, they at least boast a considerable amount of detail. The levels scroll horizontally with the background moving smoothly and impressively in parallax.

The joystick control system is responsive and intuitive, which is a relief because, although in all honesty one would have thought it quite hard to devise an unintuitive control mechanism for a platformer, a great many



Surprisingly for a game titled so appropriately, Neil Mohr doesn't make a guest appearance in this cracking platformer

authors seem to manage it. The sound is a tad sparse, consisting only of gunshots and explosions, although I suppose in a sense this helps contribute to the desolate space-age feel of the game, and it's certainly better than having some irritating music warbling away.

The Hideous high-score table is also deserving of a mention, featuring as it does scores allegedly set by such luminaries as Brian Cant (erstwhile Playaway ringleader), Bob Symes (he of Tomorrow's World fame in the '80s, if I'm not mistaken) and Peter Purves ('70s Blue Peter demigod).

This is a polished and challenging platform romp which should appeal to action starved arcade adventurers everywhere. I'm darned if I can get past the second level though...

Suspicious Minds



As I was flicking through some five year old issues of Amiga Computing the other day I happened across the Public Sector pages, which were in days of old written by our erstwhile sub editor Phil Morse, who subsequently hopped ship to do some serious DJ'ing somewhere or other.

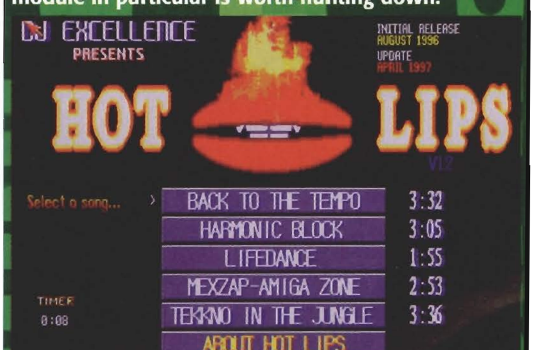
In those days, Public Sector had a regularly monthly award for the music demo of the month. To be honest, I'm not keen to revive the feature permanently because I have to say that a concerning majority of musical disks tend to be pretty poorly cobbled together offerings; that said though, I thought it was about time I mentioned some of the more notable musical submissions Public Sector has received of late.

Hot Lips, produced by DJ Excellence (aka Chris Eve) is the first up. Chris lives in the same sleepy Norfolk village as my former landlord, but I'll forgive him that because this collection of OctaMED tunes isn't at all bad.

Although, like the vast majority of music disks, Hot Lips was created using a combination of a tracker program, DPaint and AMOS, it manages to avoid being a desperate, derivative dancey affair by virtue of the fact that some of the tunes included are genuinely well produced, catchy examples of what tracker programs are actually capable of. Featuring five modules, Hot Lips is available directly from the author for £2.00.

Three MMD1 OctaMED modules were e-mailed to me by a chap called Bobby Clark, and are available in the mods/med directory of Aminet. Bobby, whose beaming face you'll find on these very pages since he kindly (but possibly foolishly) included a Jpeg image of himself, has produced plenty of modules already. These are described in his Releases So Far document using phrases such as "Crunchy, chewy, guitar-based acid techno", "Desert new age ambient tune in 7/4 meter" and "Aboriginal-flavoured goa-trance techno".

If these three examples are anything to go by, tracker music fiends would do well to check them all out. Three genuinely funky dance choons with peculiar rhythms, they feature some tasty banging breakbeats and some lovely musical shapes (says he in his best Fast Show "Jazz Club" voice). The Goanna trance module in particular is worth hunting down.



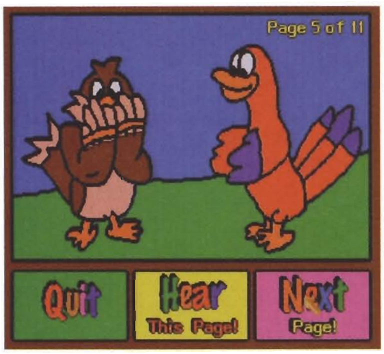
Rez & Sparky

Programmed by: Reznor Software
Available from: Classic Amiga Software
Disk No: ED120

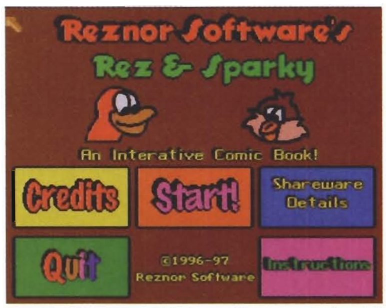
This is a curious shareware offering which might appeal to youngsters. It is described by its author as "An Interactive Comic Book", and the titular twosome it stars happen to be birds on a visit to the fair.

There are 11 different pictures that make up the storybook, and each is accompanied by a sampled snatch of narrative. On the whole the pictures are reasonably well drawn, in a colourful freehand style. The voices of the characters were supplied by the author and a member of his family, and can occasionally be a little hard to differentiate, but considering Rez & Sparky comes on a single disk and thus a high degree of compression would have been necessary, the quality is certainly passable enough.

Calling Rez & Sparky an "Interactive" experience might be going a little too far, because the interactivity basically consists of clicking "Hear this page" and "Next page" buttons using the mouse. However, the idea of a talking book on a floppy disk is quite a nice one, and although not an awful lot happens in this mini-adventure, it should entertain children for a short while at least. Since Rez & Sparky is shareware, if you use it regularly you are obliged to send the author the appropriate registration fee, which in this case is £3.50.



Its better when you can hear it, honestly



Rez & Sparky: an "interactive comic book" for kids

Ants

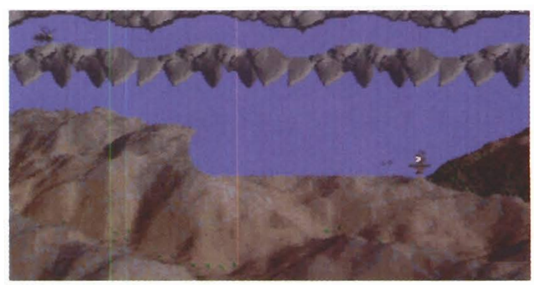
Programmed by: Steve Bailey
Available from: Roberta Smith DTP

For some strange reason, the Ants introductory screens are extremely dark on my monitor, to the point where I had to turn the brightness and contrast right up to see what was going on. Having negotiated this, I was relieved to find that the game itself didn't suffer in this way, and indeed it turned out to be a reasonably entertaining affair.

You play an ant whose 10 keys of power (don't ask me...) have been stolen by a neighbouring band of soldier ants. Armed with a large bazooka and a supply of bombs you set off to recover them. The game is divided into 10 levels, each level being one screen in size. The objective of each screen is to shoot a number of soldier ants to achieve the specified level advancement score, whereupon a key will appear which you must reach to advance to the next screen.

The keys are located underground, in which case you will have to blow away the ground with your gun or your bombs in order to reach them. There is a password system which you can use to jump back to the level on which you last died, which is extremely useful given that later levels feature multiple enemies, deadly falling boulders which are incredibly difficult to avoid, and all manner of other nasty traps.

The graphics are functional if perhaps a little simplistic, and the sound effects are satisfactory though unexceptional. What appeals about Ants is its curiously absorbing nature – as can sometimes be the case, the uncomplicated gameplay helps ensure Ants has an element of that often elusive addictiveness that programmers everywhere strive to build into their creations.



Flags Of The World

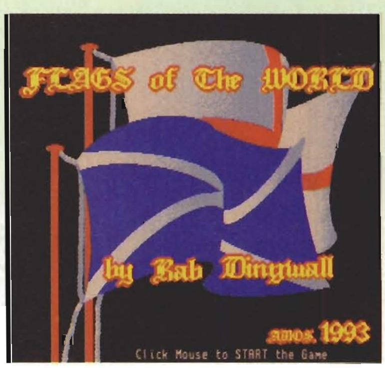
Programmed by: Rab Dingwall
Available from: F1 Licenceware
Disk No: ED99

This is the latest version of a program that has been knocking around in the Public Domain for what seems like an eternity – but, as the author notes in the accompanying Readme file, every time there is a revolution somewhere in the world, all the flags change...

Written in AMOS Pro, Flags Of The World offers a simple quiz feature whereby 10 flags are presented in sequence and the user has to choose which of five possible countries they belong to. I had considered myself reasonably knowledgeable about things like flags (I'm the sort of sad individual whose childhood car journeys invariably involved capital city quizzes), but I must confess that on my first couple of attempts I didn't manage to score more than four. It's surprising just how difficult to recognise (and indeed how hideous!) some flags are.

In order to prepare yourself for the quiz you might like to have a look at the flags of a few countries which the program offers to display upon loading. When you select a flag to view from the lengthy list it soon becomes apparent that this is an extremely comprehensive program. There are countries on the list that most people will never have heard of...

Although the game itself is, as the author acknowledges, fairly simplistic, this is nevertheless a great way of teaching children to recognise the flags of nations world-wide, and it is strangely absorbing even for adults.



With this you can impress everyone with your flagular knowledge, although everyone will think you're a bit sad

Always on my mind

5th Dimension Licenceware
1 Lower Mill Close
Goldthorpe, Rotherham
South Yorkshire S63 9BY
Tel: 01709 888127
E-mail: phil@ware5d.demon.co.uk

Classic Amiga Software
11 Deansgate
Radcliffe, Manchester M26 9YJ
Tel: 0161 723 1638

Chris Eve
8 Dale Road Dereham, Norfolk NR19 2DD

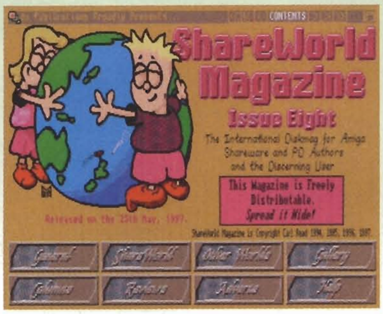
Roberta Smith DTP
190 Falloden Way
Hampstead Garden Suburb London NW11 6JE
Tel: 0181 455 1626

ShareWorld Magazine #8

Programmed by: Carl Read
Available from: Roberta Smith DTP

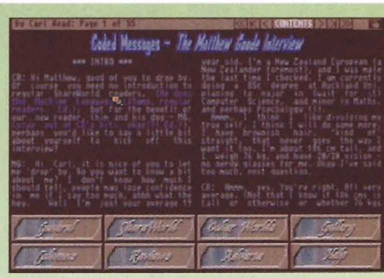
Issue eight of the beautifully presented ShareWorld magazine includes a typically diverse range of articles, accessible via a straightforward and logical interface.

The two disks contain features divided into seven main sections, namely General, ShareWorld, Other Worlds, the Gallery, Columns, Reviews and Adverts. There's also an on-line Help section. The General section includes an editorial which, unsurprisingly, discusses the Gateway 2000 buy-out of Amiga Technologies, and asks the same question that Amiga owners everywhere have probably been pondering since the news first broke: What on earth do Gateway 2000, a top-five US computer giant, want with a computer which has not been developed properly for over five years? Carl Read hypothesises that if a Java virtual machine is created on the Amiga then Gateway 2000 could market the machine as a Network Computer, which seems as plausible as plenty of the other suggestions I've heard.



ShareWorld" complete with cheesy graphics

The Reviews section is disappointingly rather brief, containing write-ups of five products including OctaMED Sound Studio (always a favourite for diskmags, it seems!) and the Blitz Support Suite. The reports are at least comprehensive, the Blitz Suite review running to a whopping 17 pages. The Other Worlds and Gallery sections are worth a look, too the former containing some interesting and beautifully presented poems and some pieces of short fiction, and the latter consisting of some quite well produced examples of computer art.



The latest issue of ShareWorld contains some interesting articles on a wide variety of topics

There are also five columns, including articles on programming in Blitz and AMOS, an engaging Esoteric Study of the English Alphabet, and a general observations and news snippets column which makes interesting reading.

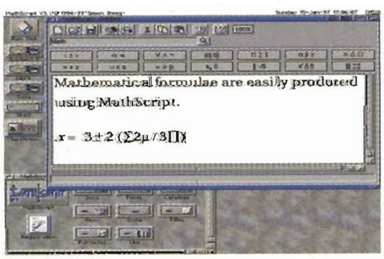
ShareWorld suffers from the same problem as most other diskmags, in that it seems to appear sporadically due to a lack of contributions and the other commitments, but it manages to avoid falling into the usual pitfalls of appearing out of date and insubstantial. As a consequence, ShareWorld is definitely amongst the most polished diskmags I've had the pleasure of reading recently.

MathScript V3.1

Programmed by: Simon Ihmig
Available from: Roberta Smith DTP

Several years ago when I frequently used my Amiga to produce scientific and mathematics reports for the courses I was studying at the time, I remember being perplexed by the notable absence from the Public Domain of a decent mathematical formula generation program. I used to have to generate elaborate line graphics in PageStream 2 (the DTP application of choice at the time), which was a time-consuming and often awkward process.

Students in a similar situation today can take comfort in the fact that there are now several formula editing programs available as shareware or public domain. MathScript is a particularly impressive example, boasting features such as a true WYSIWYG display, a wide range of mathematical symbols, Postscript Type1 and Type3 font support, and automatic formatting of input. It requires MUI 3.1 and consequently has an extremely attractive and user-friendly interface, as well as an ARexx port and on-line help.



The demo contains five missions but the full registered version has many more

The main screen consists of a working area above which is a bank of buttons. Each button gives access to a range of symbols; for instance, one button brings up a selection of mathematical operators such addition and multiplication signs, whilst another brings up a range of Greek symbols for products, summations and integrals. Once you have created a formula you can save it in IFF, TIFF or EPS formats for use in a DTP program or in a graphical word processor such as Wordworth or Final Writer.

MathScript is a highly polished piece of software, but you will certainly need a powerful Amiga to make real use of it because otherwise you could well find it unbearably slow. The program is shareware, and the evaluation version is only usable for 21 days and is incapable of saving and loading settings. Registration costs £15 and can be carried out using the special registration utility included in the archive. For mathematicians and students who need to produce regular reports, this utility could prove worth its weight in gold.

The Wonder Of You

Each month Public Sector tries to bring you the very best of the latest PD and shareware releases. Consequently I want to hear from you if you have any program, whatever its purpose, which you consider worthy of review. Whether it will be freely distributable Public Domain, Shareware or Licenceware, if you feel it is of sufficient quality to merit coverage then cram it onto a 3.5", slap it into a padded envelope with a cover letter and wang it with all haste in my general direction. Some days later when said envelope tumbles gently through my letterbox, I'll tear it open, shove it in my drive and don my evaluating cap, with the creme de la submissions earning reviews in these pages. The magic address is:

Dave Cusick
PD submissions
Amiga Computing
Media House
Adlington Park
Macclesfield SK10 4NP

Since I've had a fair few people sending me submissions via the Internet, I suppose it's time I officially made allowances for this. You can e-mail me at sector@dcus.demon.co.uk with your submission attached, but please don't send anything larger than about 500k, because I have a phone bill to think of...

AMIGA GUIDE

Paul Overaa checks out a couple of small utilities that you might find useful

Striking A Chord

One of the great things about most public domain software is that it is not (in the main) driven by what is, or is not, commercially viable. Most programmers who write it do so either for fun, academic interest or because they themselves want particular utilities but have been unable to find suitable offerings from other sources.

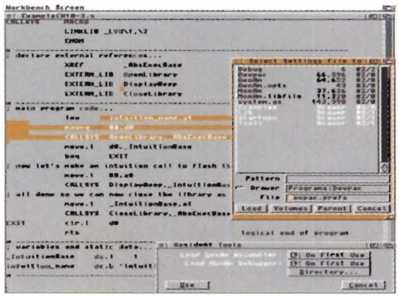
Chances are then that if a piece of software has a potential specialised use, despite the fact that commercial software houses may choose to steer well clear of such development, someone somewhere will have spent their spare time knocking up a freely distributable utility to suit. Granted the final software may not perhaps be as polished as a commercial offering might be, but it'll usually still do its intended job well enough.

For many years of course a lot of this software ended up in pd libraries, in collections like the Fish disks, but nowadays Aminet is the centre of attraction and it was whiles browsing through the Aminet archives the other day I came across a couple of utilities that I thought might be of some general use.

The first download was a little 'freeware' program called ChordMaster, written by Chris Carr as an aid to writing music. It allows you to enter a collection of notes and get a listing of relevant chords that contain those notes. In fact, three groups of chords are returned: Exact matches, matches for those chords that contain the specified notes along with one extra note and wider matches where the full chord contains both the notes specified and two extra notes.

The chords searched for will use every combination of the inputted notes (so any chosen note can be the root) and if, for example, you specify notes F# and C# then you'll be offered F#5 as an exact match, F# and F#m (because of the missing A# and A respectively), along with various C#-based chords as 'one note out matches'. Also shown will be a variety of C# and F# chords, such as F#7 and F#add9, where two notes are missing.

ChordMaster installation is easy enough. You just copy the program, and a data file called testfile-a.txt, to your desired location and you're ready to go. This program does, incidentally, use MUI and because of the way it has been compiled it doesn't seem to run from the Workbench - so you have to start it from a Shell window. From then on, however, it's just a matter of clicking on the appropriate notes and then pressing start to see the resulting chords.



Once you've figured out which chords are needed you could then use Andreas Fredriksson's Shell-based Chordian utility to create chord samples from a single note sampled sound

The chord data for ChordMaster is actually held in testfile-a.txt with details of each chord being held on a separate line. For the techies amongst you the encoding is a binary representation of the intervals required for each chord and full details of how extra chords can be added are provided with the program's documentation. What's more, if you're into C coding, you be pleased to hear that you do in fact get given the source code as well!

Chords

The other program I came across, called Chordian, has been written by Andreas Fredriksson. It's a utility that allows you to take a raw sampled sound and create a chord from it. Again, nothing fancy as utilities go but it works well enough and does, by the way, remove some of the problems with various other chord makers in that it has an option which permits interpolation.

These chord-making utilities are useful since they make it easy to add things like string section tracks to an arrangement by creating an appropriate series of chords from a single note string synth sample. Chordian is another utility that comes with its C source code and the executable program itself is strictly Shell-based using this sort of command line...

Chordian <source> <output> [i] n1 n2 [n3..]where <source> is the sample you wish to make a chord from and <output> is the name of the chord sample you wish to create. The n values are tones relative to the base note values and while the first two (n1 and n2) values are always required, up to four intervals can be provided.

The optional i flag, incidentally, tells the program to use interpolation during the composite waveform calculations. If all this sounds a bit high-powered, don't panic - all you need to know is that although interpolation (calculation of intermediate waveform amplitude between two known points) slows down the sample mixing process a little in most cases, it produces improved overall quality in the resultant playback sound.

Of course if you are using the OctaMED Sound Studio, which provides its own built-in chord generation options (allowing you to generate samples of particular chord inversions from any specified sample) then you won't have any need for Chordian. But for everyone else it's just another of those utilities that, though not by any means earth-shattering, is still handy to have around.

Oh yes, I nearly forgot - for those of you who don't have access to Aminet I've put both the ChordMaster and Chordian utilities on the coverdisk.



ChordMaster - not awe-inspiring by any means but the utility could prove useful for anyone who struggling to figure out which notes are part of which chords!

classifieds

Incorporating Swap Shop

If your advert is 10 words or fewer, it is totally free. 11 to 20 words is only £6 and 21 words to 25 words is £10.

◆ Amiga 1200 with manuals games etc V.G.C. £130 01933 400295

◆ Games Utils for sale/very cheap write to: gm44 Gen. Zolkiewskiego St. 27600 Sandomierz, Poland

◆ Bargin A500+ 2Mb, 2 drives, 50 games, DPaint 3, VIDI12, sell for £300 ring Philip 0161 336 7921

◆ 500 plus hard drive, games, extras manuals and Studio II £80 ring Steve 01222 705 121

◆ Please anyone with either Barbarian 2 or Fascination give me a call with reasonable offer swaps considered. Stephen 01754 890 684

◆ Amiga 1200, 4Mb, 60MbHD, Additional floppy drive, monitor, printer, joysticks, games, phone Paul on 01734 816385. Evenings only £350 ono

◆ 250Mb external HDrive for 1200/600 £160 call Mr Pattison 01703 841952

◆ A1200 RAM upgrades, 4Mb £60, 8Mb £90 call 01273 493 659

◆ Seagate 2.5" 170Mb hard disk 6 months old, Heimdall 2, Arabian knights, Theme Park, Nick Faldo's Golf. Everything immaculate condition. Can post £49 0141 571 6468

◆ Amiga bits for sale plus games call Mike 01784 885 914

◆ Amiga contacts wanted Peter, 30 Rockingham Rd., Redhouse, Sunderland, SR5 5HU.

◆ Blizzard 1260 for sale with 16Mb £350 call 01795 426 114

◆ A1200 CD-Drive, 6Mb+FPU, hard drive, lots of software £485 ono call Jason 01288 356 374

◆ A1200 + CD32. Loads of stuff £300 the pair. Call Adrian 01482 843 043 ext 204

◆ Wanted Protext V6+, good condition, reasonable price. Call Darren 01282 457 689

◆ Miracle piano teaching system wanted for Amiga. Phone Mr Jones 01902 782 528

◆ Picasso II 2Mb graphics card c/w TV Paint Jnr, £170 ono. One A3640 68040 processor upgrade daughter board for A4000 6 months old £200 ono

◆ Amiga A500 1Mb, external drive, receipt for new internal drive, software, mouse, joysticks, £100. Philips 8833 MkII stereo colour monitor £85. Call Mr Hall 01706 826 965

◆ A4000 12Mb RAM, 128Mb Hd, Oktagon SCSI card, 2 x CD Rom, Rev 11 Buster, throwing in 1942 monitor £650 ono. Call Neil on 01625 878888.

ORDER FORM

Name　　　　Address

Postcode　　　　Telephone

					FREE
					£6
					£10

Cheques should be made payable to "Amiga Computing"

Please include my advertisement in the next available issue of *Amiga Computing*. I confirm that the advert is not selling illegal copies of software or hardware that do not belong to me. I permit you to publish my address/telephone number only if I have included these details within my advertisement copy. I am over 18 years of age (applicants under 18 must get a parent or guardian to sign below).

Please write clearly - we can't be held responsible for errors in your advertisement especially if your writing resembles a spider crawling across the page!

Remember to include your phone number/address in the advert as well as on the form!

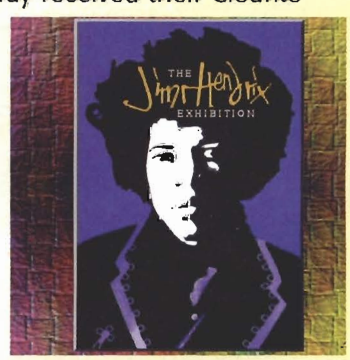
Signed.. Send to: AMC Classifieds, Media House, Adlington Park, Macclesfield SK10 4NP

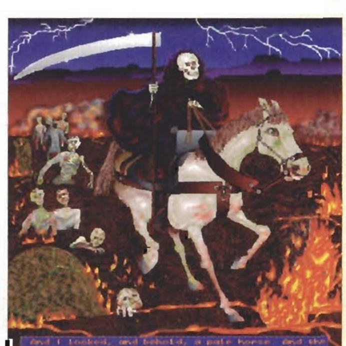


Congratulations

The prizes have finally arrived from Cloanto and these lucky people should have already received their Cloanto Personal Paint 7.1 CDs

Mr Roy Burton, Essex
Miss Sioux Davey, London
Dez Hoyle, Liverpool
K Bowden, Cornwall
Erol Kentli, Bristol
Tony Shorten, Kent
Cathy MacDonald, Kent
N Miller, Montana







Javascript a go-go

comms

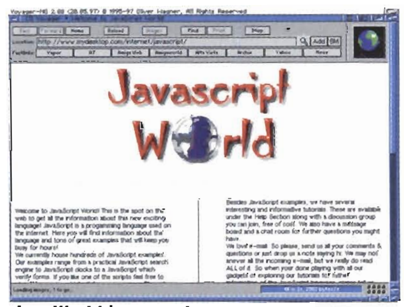
Dave Cusick examines Javascript and the problems it presents

Hopefully, by the time you read, this Voyager NG 3.0 should have appeared, complete with full support for Javascript. Not to be confused with Sun Microsystems' Java technology about which we seem to be hearing so much, Javascript is a creation of Netscape which is fundamentally different in a variety of ways.

That said, there are two important similarities between Java and Javascript: They both offer you the possibility of adding some impressive features to your Web pages, and they both raise possible security issues for surfers everywhere.

Whereas Java applets are precompiled and stored on the remote server, and then simply called by including <APPLET> tags in HTML documents, Javascripts are actually included in the HTML document (generally between the <HEAD> tags) and then called later in the document as required. Rather than being a separate programming language like Java, Javascript is ideal for controlling browser functions such as the manipulation of form elements, opening and closing windows and so on.

The security issues raised by Javascript are also different from those raised by Java. With Java the risks stem from users potentially downloading damaging software and executing it on their machines. With Javascript, the problems tend to arise because information or files from your machine could theoretically be copied to remote locations.



JavaWorld is a great source of impressive scripts

Security holes in Netscape Navigator version 2.0 and 2.01, well publicised on the Web, meant that directory listings of a surfer's hard drive could be uploaded, as could particular specified system files, or listings of Web sites visited during a browsing session. Further, e-mail messages could be sent off in the surfer's name without their knowing.

By version 3.01 of Netscape these problems had been fixed, but it's not reassuring that they arose in the first place. Fortunately Oliver Wagner, programmer of Voyager, has based the VNG Javascript implementation on the JS 1.2 standard which features in Netscape Navigator 4.0 (aka Communicator), so the security holes should not be an issue for Amiga users. Sometimes it can be an advantage to only get certain browser features several months after they appear on the PC...

So why is Javascript so useful? Well, as you will see if you take a look at sites like Javascript World, it is possible to produce scripts capable of providing all manner of fancy features for a Web site. On a simple level, you could add a real-time clock to your homepage, or have the status bar display details of what can be found at a linked location rather than simply displaying its URL.

More usefully, Javascript could be used to produce a simple search engine system for your site without requiring you to dip into CGI scripting (which is often not allowed anyway if you get your Web space free from your ISP).

Javascript can be used to particularly good effect in frame-based sites. Personally I am not a great fan of frames, because I feel that generally they overcomplicate navigation rather than simplifying it. However using Javascript it is possible to exercise such precise control over frames that this becomes less of a problem. For instance, you can access parent frames from within child frames and vice versa, and you can access one child frame from within another. If none of this makes sense, take a look at part three of Voodoo's Introduction To Javascript and it should become a tad clearer.

It is even possible to create documents on-the-fly, outputting them in a new window or in a frame if desired. Other practical applications covered in Voodoo's excellent guide include checking the details entered into HTML forms – for instance, finding out whether a requested e-mail address is likely to be valid by testing whether it contains an @ sign.

Before you begin eagerly adding Javascript to every page on your Web site, do bear in mind that a great many people own browsers which are, as yet, incapable of handling it correctly. Microsoft's popular PC browser Internet Explorer, for example, only supports Javascript 1.0, and thus many of the commands available to VNG and Netscape Navigator users will result in error messages or may even crash their browser.

When constructing Web sites aimed at the broad spectrum of Internet users it is therefore a good idea to check whether visitors possess compatible browsers, and if you do not want to include alternative plain HTML pages then you should at least warn users that your pages make use of Javascript.



Netscape, creators of Javascript, provide details of what the language is capable of

Contact

If you wish to contact me, my e-mail address is dave@dcus.demon.co.uk. Questions, suggestions and feedback are all more than welcome. I also have a homepage, which can be found at http://www.dcus.demon.co.uk/.

Sites of Interest

Voyager NG – http://www.vapor.com/voyager/

Netscape's Introduction to Javascript – http://home.netscape.com/comprod/products/navigator/version_2.0/script/index.html

Details of Netscape's Javascript security holes – http://www.osf.org/~loverso/javascript/

Javascript World (A massive collection of example scripts and tutorials) – http://www.mydesktop.com/internet/javascript/

Voodoo's Introduction To Javascript (an eleven-part guide) – http://rummelplatz.uni-mannheim.de/~skoch/js/tutorial.htm

Seek & ye shall find

Paul Overaa provides some notes on usingthe ARexx file positioning Seek() function

arexx

With all high-level file operations, the current read/write position is monitored to ensure that simple sequential file operations occur as expected. It is, however, also possible for a program to alter the file's position pointer using a Seek() function. This sets the internal file position pointer of a file to a new position and returns a value giving that position relative to the start of the file, with the format of the function call being:

```
new_position=Seek(file_handle, offset [, BEGIN
 | CURRENT | END ])
```

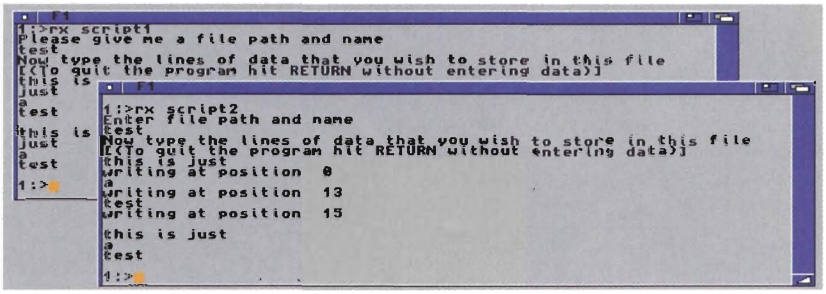
The required position is specified relative to an anchor point and ARexx is pretty flexible here allowing the anchor to be given in one of these three ways: BEGIN ('B') indicates a zero or positive offset from the beginning of the file. CURRENT ('C') indicates a positive, zero or negative offset from the current file position pointer. END ('E') indicates a negative or zero offset from the end of the file. The default anchor type is CURRENT (so if no explicit anchor type is provided the offset will be assumed to be from the current file position pointer).

One immediate use of this function is to eliminate the need to close, and then re-open, a modified file in order to re-read it. Listing 1 shows a simple example that collects lines of text typed at the keyboard.

When an empty line is detected (i.e. when the user just hits the return key) the input loop terminates and immediately after this a Seek(file,0,'B') call is made. At this point the file remains open but since its file pointer has been reset to the start of the file again the file is effectively in the same state as it would be had it just been opened.

Notice, incidentally, that I have opened the file for writing but, having written the supplied data and reset the file position pointer using Seek(), I then use Readln() to READ data from a file. This works and it illustrates an important point regarding the various so called reading and writing 'file modes' not just in ARexx but in all programming languages.

The only thing that the various file mode options do is set up suitable file position pointer values and it is normally possible to both read from files that were opened for writing and to write to files opened for reading, yet many coders do not realise this.



You'll find these two example scripts on this month's coverdisk.

```
Seek() can also be used to identify file posi-
tions like this..
say Seek(file,0,'C')
```

In the second example (which you'll find on the cover disk) this is exactly what we are doing. The Seek() function is used with a 'zero from current' value just to collect and display the returned position pointer (remember that file positions are numbered from zero). So, as you type in lines of text the program will be telling you the positions within the file that the lines are being stored.

Needless to say this month's examples have aimed primarily to introduce the Seek() function rather than to delve into its more sophisticated uses. The function can, however, be used to implement all manner of powerful random access, indexed, and hash-access file-reading schemes.

Of course when you start dealing with write operations made after a file position pointer has been moved away from the current end of the file data will overwrite existing data in the file so a little care needs to be taken.

It's not just conventional record-based file access methods where Seek() find use either. You could, for example, implement an ARexx IFF file reader that skips through the various chunks of data picking out chosen items of interest.

Midi files, which are also chunked based, could similarly be parsed using routines which examine the header and track chunks passing the identified positions of the various chunks to a routine that then extracts the actual data using conventional sequential file reading functions like Readch().

With any application like this it's obviously necessary to have detailed knowledge of the file's structure, i.e. its internal layout, but normally getting hold of this sort of information presents little problem as far as standard file formats are concerned. Next month I'll try and come up with a slightly more advanced example of this nature that illustrates Seek()'s power in this respect.

```
/* script1.rexx */
say 'Please give me a file path and name'
pull filename$
say "Now type the lines of data that you wish to store in this file'
say "[(To quit the program hit RETURN without entering data)]"
if Open(file, name$,'w') then do
parse pull line$          /* get first input  */
do while line$~==''
call Writeln(file, line$)
parse pull line$
end
call Seek(file,0,'B') /* now move to beginning of file */
do while ~EOF(file)
line$=Readln(file)
say line$
end
call Close(file)
end
else say 'sorry - cannot open this file'
```

Listing 1: With this Seek()-based approach you can read from a file that you've written to without having to close and re-open it first!

Neil Mohr takes a quick look at links, and about time to!

publishing

Missing Link

I think it is about time I took a look at the thing that makes the Web work – links. Adding links to an HTML document is incredibly easy using the anchor tag <A>. Using this, any text or image can be made to link to another document or file. For example, if I had the text "read the Amiga Computing Web site". To link the words Amiga Computing to the actual AC Web site I would use the following

```
<a href="http://www.idg.co.uk/amigacomp/">Amiga Computing</a>
```

As you can see, the words surrounded by the start and end anchor tags will be made into a link to the document listed by the HREF attribute that is stored in the start <a> tag. If you want to link an image to the Amiga Computing Web site, the HTML you would use is as follows.

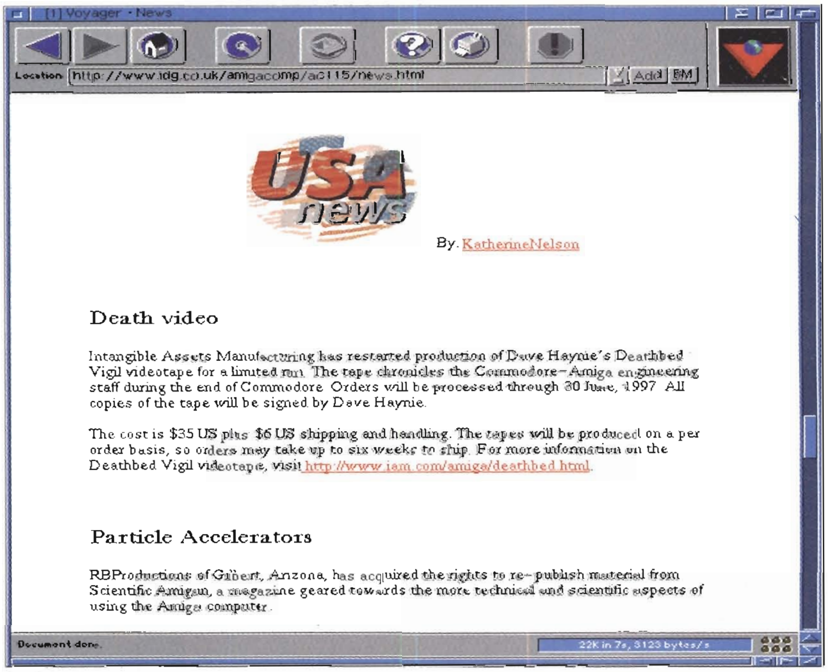
```
<a href="http://www.idg.co.uk/amigacomp/"> <img src="aclogo.gif"> </a>
```

Pretty simple, if you need to link to another HTML document just make the HREF attribute equal the Web address. It is of course possible to put links to documents that are stored relative to the current HTML document. This means you can have links to documents stored on the same site as the current page.

So if you are creating your own Web site and have a news page stored in the same directory as the index page, href="news.html" would create the correct link. If the news page were in its own directory, then href="news/news.html" would do the trick. If you need to access a document that is in a directory above add ../ to go up a single level in the directory structure, or add as many as you need.

If need be, you can add links to specific sections in a document, be it the current or another document. To start, if you want to mark a particular part of a document as the start of one of these sections, add the anchor tag, but use the **NAME** attribute to give that section a name such as Here we start part two. Of course you do not need to have anything in between the two tags, but you must always close the anchor tag, otherwise all manner of problems will crop up.

To link to this section a normal anchor is used again, but a hash mark is used after the documents name to show that this links to a section of the document.




```
<a
href="http://www.idg.co.uk/index.html#part2">Go to part 2</a>
```

This link would jump you straight to where the part two section is. It is also possible to link to sections within the same document. All you use is the hash symbol and the name of the section you want, like <a href="#part2">.

Another speciality is adding links to, a handy little think that turns people's e-mail addresses into links to your mail package. To do this just add the e-mail address as a normal link but add **mailto:** to the start of the e-mail address to let the browser know it is an e-mail address like so

```
<a href="mailto:edit@acomp.demon.co.uk">Amiga Computing</a>
```

Get organised

Another reason for leaving links to a later date is that, before you start seriously on creating a set of Web pages, you should really put your mind to how you will organise all your pages and graphics on your hard drive. A few minutes thought now can save a lot of frustration in the future.

To start with you should have at least one sub-directory in which to store all your graphics. It may even be wise to subdivide this into separate directories depending on how you use your graphics. A separate drawer for buttons, backgrounds or banners.

If you are planning to regularly update your page you need to give thought to how regularly this will happen. Currently, the AC Web site gets updated once a month and each new month gets its own directory, but this was bad planning. 19 months later and 19 new drawers on the Web site. Ideally, each month should be placed in a year drawer. So you can see if you are planning weekly updates, it would be wise to have year, month and week drawers.

Another argument for using drawers is that, if at some stage, you want to re-organise your site, it is much easier to move a drawer and know that everything used by the pages is in that drawer.

Run-time libraries form the cornerstone of all Amiga programming

Some Exel Magic

Doubtless most of you have plenty of experience of library function use but I thought it might be useful to look underneath the surface and explain a little about the arrangements used.

A run-time library is basically a collection of routines accessed via a table consisting of series of jump instructions and to execute any given routine the library's base address is used in conjunction with a negative displacement called a library vector offset (LVO) value (which is just the entry point in the corresponding library jump table).

Before a call to a library function is made the base address of the library is placed in register a6 so if, for example, we consider the Intuition library's DisplayBeep() function (used to 'flash' an Intuition screen) then the 680x0 calling code will look something like this...

```
move.l  _IntuitionBase, a6
jsr     _LVODisplayBeep(a6)
```

Regular readers will know, however, that I always package up such library calls using this sort of, a6 preserving, macro form...

```
CALLSYS DisplayBeep,_IntuitionBase
```

The outcome however is the same regardless of how the code is written. The indirect subroutine call results in program control branching to the _LVODisplayBeep table entry of the library-structure/jump-table unit (set up in memory when the Intuition library is opened). The jump table entry then branches to the 'real' library routine.

Each of the jump table entries are six bytes long with the first four – Open, Close, Expunge and Reserved – pointing to routines which control the use of the library. Open is an entry point called when the library is opened and is the routine responsible for incrementing the count of the number of users of a particular library. Close is a corresponding routine which decreases the user count and, when the count gets to zero (ie the last library user indicates that the library is no longer needed), one of its other jobs is to set a flag that indicates that an 'Expunge' (library removal) operation can be performed.

```
STRUCTURE LIB,LN_SIZE
          UBYTE    LIB_FLAGS     internal flags
          UBYTE    LIB_pad       must be set to zero
          UWORD    LIB_NEGSIZE   number of bytes before library
structure
          UWORD    LIB_POSSIZE   number of bytes after library
structure
          UWORD    LIB_VERSION   major version number
          UWORD    LIB_REVISION  minor version number
          APTR     LIB_IDSTRING  ASCII identification
          ULONG    LIB_SUM       system-calculated checksum
          UWORD    LIB_OPENCNT   number of current users
          LABEL    LIB_SIZE
```

Listing 1: Layout of a library node

The base address returned by an OpenLibrary() call is, in reality, the address in memory of the start of the Library node structure shown in listing 1.

A number of flags can be set in the first field of the structure (definitions can be found in the exec/libraries.i include file) and immediately after the flags byte comes a 'pad' field used for word alignment.

The LIB_NEGSIZE and LIB_POSSIZE fields are used to record the size of the complete library unit when it is set up in ram and these fields are initialised when Exec loads the library. They are needed by the expunge routine which, among other things, has to release the associated memory when the library is removed. This freeing operation, incidentally, is performed by calculating the overall library size and then making a FreeMem() call in this fashion...

```
move.w   LIB_NEGSIZE(a5),d0
suba.l   d0,a1
add.w    LIB_POSSIZE(a5),d0
JSRLIB   FreeMem
```

JSRLIB is one of the system defined library function calling macros. It is similar to the CALLSYS macro that I use but it does not preserve register a6. It can be used therefore when a6 already holds the correct library base for the function call.

Altering

Once the purpose of these jump tables is understood, the mechanisms used to modify system functions become almost obvious – in order to replace a library routine, all you need to do is alter the appropriate jump table vector. The Amiga's Exec library contains a SetFunction() routine which allows a program to reset a library vector in this way and if for example you wanted to replace the Intuition DisplayBeep() function (which has an LVO value of -$0060) with some alternative routine called _SomeDodgyRoutine(), it could be done like this...

```
move.l    _IntuitionBase,a1     library to be
modified
move.w    #-$0060     function offset
move      _SomeDodgyRoutine     new routine
CALLSYS   SetFunction,_SysBase
move.l    d0,old_pointer
```

From this point on, any program which called DisplayBeep() would end up executing _SomeDodgyRoutine(), instead. The general implications of these sorts of changes are far reaching and most virus checkers do look at the important jump table vectors, such as those relating to the Exec library and trackdisk device, to ensure that they are not changed in this way!

Reentrancy Issues

For exec-style libraries to be used by many different programs at the same time they need to be written so that they are reentrant. It is in fact possible to create an Amiga run-time library using non-reentrant functions and this works fine providing only one program ever accesses those routines at any one time.

The way to do this is to arrange for the library's Open vector to be coded in such a way that the LIB_OPENCNT field value is checked and, when a second attempted use of the library is made, a NULL error indicator is returned rather than the library base (listing 2 shows a typical non-reentrant run-time library Open routine).

Non-reentrant Exec style run-time libraries are seen occasionally but more often than not they are just used as a stepping stone on the way to developing fully reentrant code. Why? Well, if you haven't guessed, it's because reentrant code is, initially, a little more time consuming to write.

```
open           tst.w      LIB_OPENCNT(a6)
               bne.s      prevent_open
addq.w  #1,LIB_OPENCNT(a6)
bclr
#LIBB_DELEXP,LIB_FLAGS(a6)
               move.l     a6,d0
               rts
prevent_openmoveq         #0,d0
               rts
```

Listing 2 An Open routine for a non-reentrant run-time library

More C-style Intuition help as Paul Overaa explains Intuition messages

Message in an Intui

Intuition always sends information about events of interest using an extended Exec message called an IntuiMessage. The layout of this data block, as a C structure, is shown in listing 1 and one of its most important components is the Class field whose bits correspond directly with the equivalent IDCMP flags.

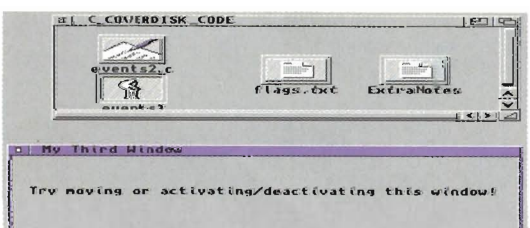
Standard names for these flags are available in the header files and they are used to both select which types of messages you wish to receive (as we saw last month) and to distinguish between the various types of message that may arrive at a window's message port. You will, incidentally, find details of a selection of the most useful flags listed in the flags.txt file on the coverdisk.

Your first step when handling an IntuiMessage is usually to check the contents of the Class field against particular flag definitions so that you know what type of message has arrived and, once that information is available, you're then in a position to interpret the remaining fields.

The reason that the message Class is usually determined first is that the contents of some fields depend on the type of message: If, for instance, the keyboard device is providing raw keyboard data then the Code field will contain the untranslated key press character and the Qualifier field can tell you whether or not the shift or ctrl keys were also pressed.

Similarly, the address of the object to which the message refers is, where applicable, provided in the IAddress field. Whenever you have to find out about the current state of Intuition objects (e.g. whether a Gadget is on or off) you'll use this address to locate the object's structure. You'll often see the Class and IAddress variables used jointly for selecting gadget and menu item message handling routines.

Other fields have fixed purposes. For example,



This month's example asks Intuition for details about any window movement or window activation/deactivation that occurs

```
*
BOOL IntuitionEvent(ULONG class)
{
BOOL exit_flag=FALSE;
switch (class) {
case IDCMP_CLOSEWINDOW:    exit_flag=TRUE; break; case
IDCMP_CHANGEWINDOW:   DisplayBeep(NULL); break; case al = IDCMP_ACTIVEWINDOW:   DisplayBeep(NULL); break;
                         case IDCMP_INACTIVEWINDOW: DisplayBeep(NULL); break;
                         default:      exit_flag=TRUE; break;
          }
return(exit_flag);
}
```

Listing 2: The C switch statement provides an easy way of identifying particular types of IntuiMessages

each IntuiMessage is stamped with mouse co-ordinates and the system time. MouseX and MouseY identify the position of the mouse at the time given by the Seconds and Micros fields. The other two fields in the structure are IDCMPWindow, which is a pointer to the relevant Window structure, and SpecialLink which is used only by the system.

The ExecMessage fields contain data items such as the length of the message, which are needed by Exec. You are unlikely to want this information and you certainly should not interfere with it.

IDCMP System

Our concern at the moment is the structure of the parts of the program which handle these messages, i.e. detect them, identify their class and act on them.

There are a couple of points that need watching: Firstly, when functions such as WaitPort() return it means that one or more messages will have arrived at the user port – so a loop arrangement, able to handle any number of messages, must be executed whenever a message signal is detected.

Secondly it is usually necessary to continue to look for such messages (or batches of messages) until such time as the program terminates and you saw how this can be done in the previous instalment.

This month's coverdisk example code extends things a bit by asking to be informed when the user hits the close gadget or moves, activates or deactivates the program's window. Whenever any of these messages are received they then get passed to a separate function, an 'event handler' called IntuitionEvent(), which uses the message's class information in a C switch statement in order to decide what to do with it.

All I'm doing with the example program is flashing the screen using the Intuition Library's DisplayBeep() function whenever the appropriate messages occur. Needless to say, the aim at the moment is to keep things as simple as possible and this method, whilst not producing much in the way of output information, offers a straightforward and visible sign that an event has been dealt with.

Nightmare

If you are a new C coder who has never been involved with multi-tasking systems before then, despite the example program being small, you may well be struggling with these event handling issues.

Don't worry, we've all been there, and message collection and use does become second nature with practice. In short don't worry too much – be content initially with trying to develop a general appreciation of what is going on and, in time, things will start to make sense.

The good news of course is that once you're able to handle one or two types of IntuiMessages, you are home and dry and catering for extra events is just a matter of incorporating additional case entries into the switch statement.

```
struct IntuiMessage  {
            struct                  Message
ExecMessage;
            ULONG                  Class;
            UWORD                  Code;
            UWORD                  Qualifier;
            APTR                   IAddress;
            WORD                   MouseX,
MouseY;
            ULONG                  Seconds,
Micros;
            struct Window           *IDCMP-
Window;
            struct IntuiMessage     *Spe-
cialLink;
            };
```

Listing 1: Formal definition of the IntuiMessage structure

AMIGA ACTION

INSIDE THIS MONTH:

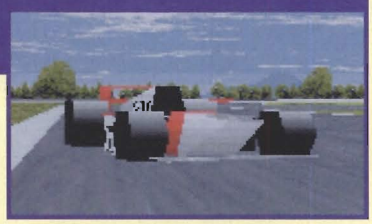
F15II Strike Eagle, Big Red Adventure Cheats,
Aussie Interview and Grandpa Jo
plus loads loads more...



AMIGA ACTION news

Sell your granny! All those smart looking games we told you about a few months ago should be available by autumn, so start raising some capital...

Epic to publish Alien Formula One





The games wing of Epic Publishing have announced that they will be publishing the excellent Alien F1. Alien F1 was unveiled by author Paolo Catini a few months ago and received very favourable comments from the Amiga community. Thankfully it looks as though Epic will want to include an 'arcade' mode in the game so you can go shooting around the track without the spinning off at every corner.

In the mean time Epic should be bringing out a couple of quality games, the puzzler Marbleous and the shoot 'em up Mega Typhoon.

Maim and Mangle

Maim and Mangle has had quite a chequered history. After being cancelled earlier this year the developers Demious Design have decided to restart work on the project. The game is penned in for a commercial release later this year with a host of new features.

Maim and Mangle is a real time strategy game along the lines of Command and Conquer and should, if everything goes according to plan include TCP/IP support, night time combat, weather effects and up to three different competing factions.

Like many new Amiga games, Maim and Mangle will be on CD-Rom. A graphics board might well be needed but, Demious plan to produce an AGA version. You can contact Demious by mailing them at: ghornmoeASG.unb.ca

More from Guildhall...





Guildhall have just announced the latest additions to their range of EA and Microprose rereleases. In addition to Silent Service II which we reviewed last month, and F15II, Guildhall are releasing Blitz Tennis, and the excellent Helicopter sim, Gunship 2000 (which we review next month).

Around about mid July, Guildhall plan to release Cannon Fodder and Cannon Fodder II as well as Dune II, Overlord, Sensible Golf, Civilization and Player Manager. In addition to selling all these games on floppy, Guildhall are intending to release all titles on CD Rom.

For more info, phone Guildhall on 01302 890000

And more from Ablaze


TIGER TANK - MM01 PROTOTYPE

Ablaze Entertainment, the developers of Vulcan's new beat 'em up, Strangers have revealed details of their next Amiga project. Diversia promises to be the Amiga's answer to Command and Conquer and will feature real-time war strategy and loads of individual platoons and units, each with advanced artificial intelligence. As is the growing trend with new Amiga games, Diversia will offer network play.

Apparently the game is currently 25% complete and will run on an 030 processor with 4 Mb of Fast Ram. The game will also be developed to run on PowerPC processors making it compatible with any future Amiga.



Olofight

The curiously titled Olofight is a new parallax scrolling Beat 'em Up currently being developed for the Amiga. Although only in the early stages of development at the moment the game boasts an impressive array of features including 10 different fighters, each with 150 animation frames and 10 special moves. Apparently there will also be objects moving on the different parallax layers creating a realistic 3D motion. The graphics are 100% rendered with animated backgrounds. Another novel feature is the musical accompaniment which should adapt itself to events in the game. Developers The Real Ologram say the game should be finished sometime in August.

Foundation

Sadeness Software look set to enter the Amiga games market with Paul Berkey's excellent looking Foundation. The C&C/Populous type strategy game is set to be released in November and looks set to be one of the best games to brought out on the machine in recent years. Although Foundation will run on an A1200 with 4 meg Fast RAM the game includes so many features and options you'd expect a Cray to have difficulties. TCP/IP is planned, as is CyberGFX support.



Sadeness are offering anybody interested the chance to actually star in the game. The individual Peasants and Maidens in the game need decent names and faces, so if you fancy trying to attain your 15 minutes of fame send the author Paul a photo of your ugly mug.

According to Paul, 'The image can be any format - GIF, IFF, PCX, BMP etc.. but I'd prefer no JPEGS due to the lousy compression. JPEGS will be okay if it's a large picture. Any number of colours although more than 16 is preferred and 256 or any true colour picture is better. Size must be at least 64x64 and the file size must be less than 80k. If it's a JPEG then I'd prefer the face to be 128x128 or bigger but stick with the below 80k rule and avoid JPEG if possible...the perfect image would be 128x128 PNG format in 24bit colour and any size below 80k.'

For more information take a look at our Amiga Action interview with the creator of Foundation, Paul Burkey.

Send the images in the correct format to paul@sneech.demon.co.uk stating the subject of the email as 'Foundation Mug-Shot' .

For more information take a look at our Amiga Action interview with the creator of Foundation, Paul Burkey.

Nothingness



Developers Melina SoftWorks and Casiopee Development have released screenshots of a new adventure game currently under development entitled Nothingness. We'll bring you mere details as we get them...

BlackBlade Beauty

The Shadow of the Third Moon, the spectacular voxel rendered flight sim from BlackBlade is available now from the Titan Computer website. The game was recently signed by the German software company and a downloadable demo can be found at http://www.voss-net.de/titanhb/ shadow.html.

BlackBlade are hoping to release the game in August, and from first impressions it looks being the best game released on the Amiga to date. The voxel rendering enables you to fly across mountains and valleys reminiscent of the helicopter sim Commanche or Terminal Velocity.

We'll bring you a full preview feature on the game next month - in the mean time you'll have to make do with some screenshots...



BLIMEY!



Just before we went to press we were contacted by a new software company, Alive MediaSoft who told us that they have developed a special emulator which will enable them to effectively port over almost any game from the AppleMac.

Alive is already preparing to release Doom I and II, Phantasmagoria and LucasArt's Dark Forces. These games will most likely require 8 Mb Ram, hard drive, CD Drive and an 030 processor.



We'll bring you a massive feature on Alive's plans next month including an interview with the company...

H-BOMB



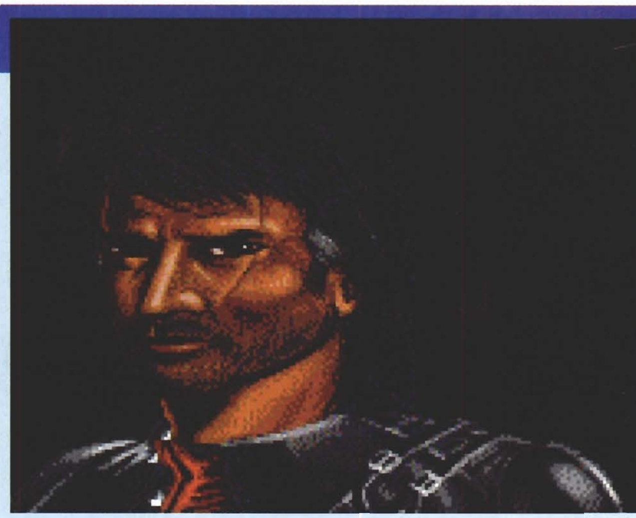
Canadian developers Aurora have announced that they are developing a new Amiga game called H-Bomb (don't worry, it's not about nuking people - the H stands for hover). Aurora describe the game as being a 'multiplayer blast fest' based on the old classic, Bomberman.

Like almost all new Amiga titles, H-Bomb should be on CD Rom with TCP/IP support and internet or network gaming. According to Aurora the will enable you to play on 20 different battlefields, along with three other players. You'l be able to play in teams or just blast anything that moves in a four man death match. For more deatils contact Aurora at http://www.auroraworks.com/

PHOENIX

Developers Future Tales have released details of their latest project, a very impressive looking space trading/3D dogfight type game in the same vein as Privateer. According to a Future Tales press release the game will be graphically excellent:

'PHOENIX's 3-D-engine is based on the latest, hottest chunky-to-planar-routines and pushes the AGA chipset to its limits by offering a fully textured polygon-engine. Expect highly detailed starships like you've never seen before on a native Amiga screen, together with colourful backgrounds consisting of clouds, planets and suns. These suns are not just ordinary bitmaps, they are lightsources that will produce the popular lens flares in real-time, when You take a look at Your ship from the outside. You will discover small, agile hunters, big, slow cargo freighters and gigantic space stations.'



Apparently Phoenix has been produced exclusively on the Amiga with most of the graphics coded on a Blizzard1260-equipped Amiga1200 with 16 MB fastram. The animation parts of the game have been designed and raytraced using CINEMA 4D and other graphics using Deluxe Paint V.

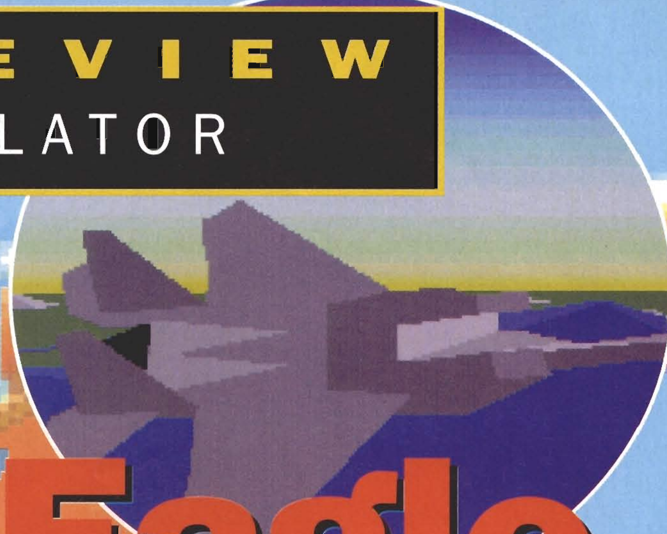
The pedigree of the game is apparent from those involved in creating and designing it. Emmanuel Henne, the computer artist behind the excellent Trapped!, and 3-D specialist Markus Poellmann, who helped programme Islona's Flyin High are both involved in the project.

When the game is released in November it should boast:

- 256 colours throughout
- advanced 3-D-engine
- raytraced stills and animations
- Adventure, Action and Trading based on a linear storyline
- many different characters
- more than 15 planets to fly to
- more than 15 goods to deal with
- TCP/IP-support (planned)
- 2 years of development



ACTION REVIEW
FLIGHT SIMULATOR



F15 II Strike Eagle

Hugh Poynton dons his flying helmet and goggles and takes a look at Guildhall's latest offering

Almost a decade ago, Microprose brought out F15 Strike Eagle in the US. Written by that founding father of early gaming, Sid Meier and play tested by the famous Major 'Wild Bill' Stealy, the game virtually launched the combat flight sim genre.

Sid Meier went on to make a fortune writing more or less every God game imaginable while 'Wild Bill' started a new company, Interactive Magic, wrote the immensely successful Air Warrior games and grew steadily madder until he decided to buy a (real) WWII fighter plane to terrorise the population of California.



Originally released in 1991, Strike Eagle II has spent the last few years growing mould in a little cupboard at Microprose HQ. Until now that is. Guildhall has decided to add the game to its already impressive looking range of EA and Microprose re-releases.

And what a worthy addition Strike Eagle is. In terms of graphics and gameplay, it is perhaps one of Microprose's finest flight sims for the Amiga. A clear and uncomplicated front end allows you to choose one of the standard theatres of war – Russia's North Cape, home of the Northern Red Banner Fleet, the oil fields of the Persian Gulf, Libya's terrorist camps, round two of the Vietnam conflict and Western Europe.

Once you've chosen your field of battle, strap yourself into the cockpit and go do some damage. The first thing you'll notice will be the much improved graphics – better I would say than even Microprose's F117A. The graduated sky looks amazing, particularly on dawn or dusk raids and the sky towards the horizon takes on a yellow tinge, like you'd see about half an hour after the sun had gone down.

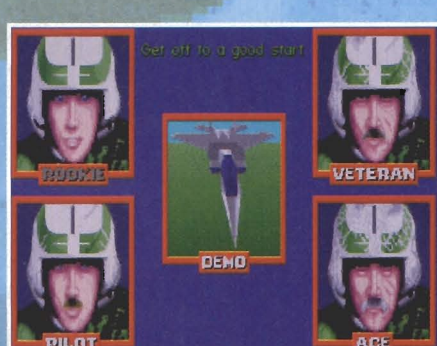
Other touches also add to the experience. Your plane is a realistic representation of an F15, the polygon model 'smoke' pouring out of unfortunate enemy looks dynamic and realistic, and the game plays at a tremendously impressive pace. When doing Mach one at 300 feet the graphics shoot past you quickly enough to make you think you might be going a little too fast to pull up before that mountain...

One novel feature, and something I haven't seen on previous Microprose releases, is the Director option. Turn this option on and every pot shot you take at the enemy (or vice versa) will be displayed from the best cinemagraphic angle.

Every time I review one of Guildhall's Microprose re-releases I seem to say exactly the same thing – go buy it. F15 II is no different, if you've got even the slightest desire to hurtle about the sky blowing up MiGs, this is the game for you.



These are your enemies. They are enemies of fashion. Bomb them and their desperately unstylish clothes



Your skill level is represented by the size and colour of your moustache

THE LOW-DOWN

PUBLISHER	Guildhall
DEVELOPER	Microprose
CONTACT	01302 890000
PRICE	£14.99
DISKS	2

GRAPHICS	92%
SOUND	88%
PLAYABILITY	92%
DIFFICULTY	EASY

OVERALL SCORE

91%

Foundation

Amiga Action talks to Paul Burkey, the man behind Foundation

In May 1997, Sadeness Software announced it was adding a game title to supplement its already successful range of Multimedia CDs. To live up to the high standards already set by Sadeness' excellent CD-Roms, the game had to be a quality affair – rest assured it is.

Foundation, a fascinating mix of God game and strategy war game is penned in for a November 1997 release and promises to cause quite a stir in the Amiga gaming world. We talked to the man behind the game, Paul Burkey.

Q1) *Foundation really does look like an impressive project, can you tell us something about the history of Foundation. How long has the game been in development?*

A) The game was started as an experiment towards the end of 96, I had a bit of time to waste because I was making plans for a long holiday with my friends in Brazil. I spent about six weeks working on a landscape engine based on Settlers.

The project was getting very interesting so I uploaded a Map Editor to Aminet to see what sort of feedback I could get. A few days later I was offered a free Web site so I created a Foundation homepage. Over the next two weeks the page had over two thousand visitors and I was offered a commercial deal from two well known Amiga games companies. When I returned from my holiday in November I started developing the game properly.

Q2) *Where did you get the idea and inspiration for such a game?*



A) The first inspiration came from The Settlers. I had spent so many hours playing the game with my friend Barry, who also happens to be the source of much of the speech in Foundation. We had always discussed the game's good points as well as its bad and we always longed for a sequel that would fulfil our needs.

When the follow-up came about we found that only the PC platform was to be covered. I didn't play Settlers II but I did gaze at the many pictures that filled the magazines at the time. That was how Foundation started, but during the development I have been exposed to some interesting alternatives.

When I discovered WarCraft II it gave me a



The game is about making trade...



...and killing the enemy



Send your photograph off to Sadeness, and you can become a character in the game

totally new outlook and made me realise how much strategy games had evolved since the early days of Settlers. I have since had the opportunity to play Settlers II and was amazed by the wonderful graphics, but I was equally amazed at the lack of improvement to the gameplay. I plan to make that advance with Foundation.



Q3) *How do you go about designing a game of this size and complexity? Did you have the game's features and options in mind when you set out to write the game, or have they evolved over time?*

A) Everything is evolving all the time. You often don't realise how much fun something can be until you play about with it, and that's the way I like to work. It's also good to know when something isn't working. I like to listen to other people's ideas but it's difficult to fit everything into the game without things getting to chaotic.

Q4) *Would you agree that although the quantity of Amiga games has fallen in the last few years, the quality, complexity and specifications of some really do supersede anything that has come before? Amiga games such as Foundation, Explorer 2260 and Alien F1GP surely would have been unimaginable only a few years ago.*

A) Yes, I think programmers like myself are finding out how easy it is to support the high-end Amiga. Writing a game that works for graphics cards or sound cards is very easy thanks to software like CyberGraphics or AHI. Faster processors give more room for creativity and the Amiga's natural multitasking combined with the power of the Internet opens up a new area for Amiga games.

The CD format provides another way for developers to be more creative. There are fewer restrictions to worry about and the latest flow of game developments just goes to show how things are changing for the good.

Q5) *What are your plans after Foundation? Do you want to write games for PowerPC Amigas?*

A) I will start developing for the PowerPC as soon as possible. As for my future game plans, I want to create a true WarCraft II style game. It will trade the complexity and presentation of Foundation for a faster pace and a more back-to-basics approach. For now, all my efforts will be put into Foundation but the future does look very interesting.

Next month – an in-depth preview of Foundation.



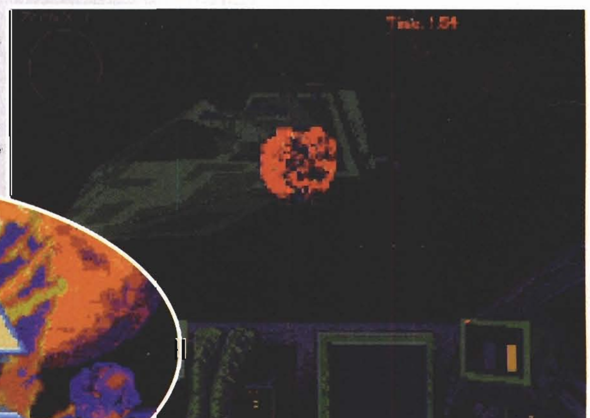
As you can see, the graphics are excellent

Wizard of Oz

Australian Software developer, GeoSync Media, is an ambitious bunch; 1997 should see the release of a whole host of quality games as well as a possible diversification into multimedia. Hugh Poynton investigates in part two of his interview with head honcho Andrew Hawkings

Q Do you believe that, because the Amiga is a relatively easy and inexpensive format to write for compared to the PC, you are more likely to discover genuinely talented programmers and game concepts? Does the fact that writing for the PlayStation (via the 'Yaroze') or PC is so prohibitively expensive that the games that will emerge will be less original and safer? What advice would you give somebody hoping to programme and produce their own game on the Amiga at the moment?

A Yes, the Amiga will continue to spawn radical programming techniques because you have to do that to compete with the other machines. Yes, it is easier to start writing on the Amiga at a low cost. I am still buying all the packages to write on the IBM. I figure it's going to cost me about $1000 US just to start. As for the PlayStation, I've read about the black Yaroze, and I'm very impressed. This type of development is a great idea, being able to share resources with others on the Net.



The Star Fighter demo is available from Geo Sync's website





Star Fighter, GeoSync's flagship product

If I were to write for the PlayStation I'd just have to start subverting the dominant paradigm and produce 'guerrilla' games, just to know what I could get away with and what the PlayStation was capable of. I don't like routine game production, it's just not right. Computers are there as tools, not bibles.

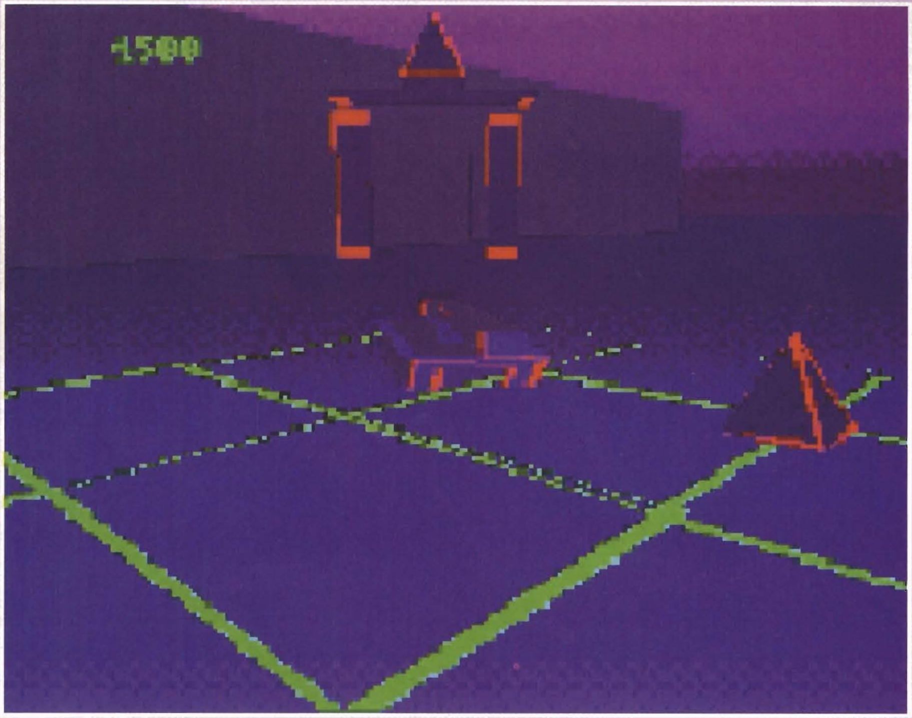
That's what I like about the Amiga community. So many people write stuff on it to prove that 'the Amiga can do it too'. It's very healthy and refreshing.

My advice to potential Amiga developers is this. 'Just Do It'. There is a wealth of support

and information on the 'net, if you get stuck.

The Amiga has a far friendlier OS and you can basically start from nothing. No outlay. Well, a couple of hundred bucks is about it. Learn machine code right away. Even if it's just to open a window in WB and pipe text to it. Assembly is a great 'toolbox' that lets you do things higher-level languages won't. There is a market there, waiting for your next OS busting classic.

On a very serious note, the Amiga is at risk of extinction from a bad reputation (AMIGA – A Merely Insignificant Games Addiction) and bad (or rather non-existent) advertising. Who remembers the phrase, "Are you keeping up with the Commodore, because the Commodore is keeping up with you?" That's the last TV ad I saw for the Amiga. The Amiga has a far superior architecture and OS to the IBM. I would like to see the IBM go back to just business apps and the Amiga take over as the ultimate multimedia station.



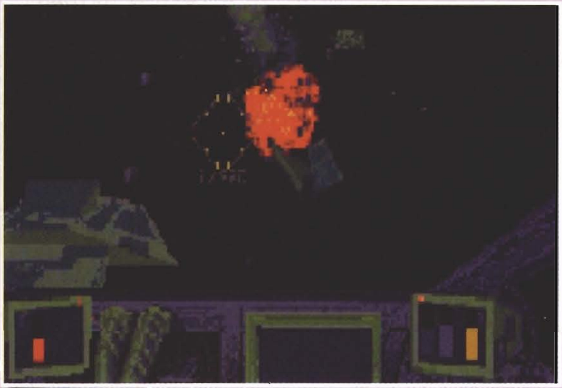
Geo Sync currently have five projects 'on the boil' including this ace tank game.

Q What do you think the future holds for Amiga gaming? Do you think that the games industry is going to gradually concentrate on writing games for very high spec Amigas or even PowerUp board equipped machines?

A I believe with a higher spec Amiga, say a 68040, 2Mb chip(or GFX card), 6Mb Fast, 500Mb HDD, 16-bit sound, 8xCD-Rom as standard, we can compete with what-ever the IBM developers churn out. I also have more respect for the Amiga developers because they optimise to suit the machine rather than bloating code and expecting users to have a 500MHz IBM with 1.2Gb ram, 256xCD-Rom and 68cm Holographic Monitor. It's just ridiculous.

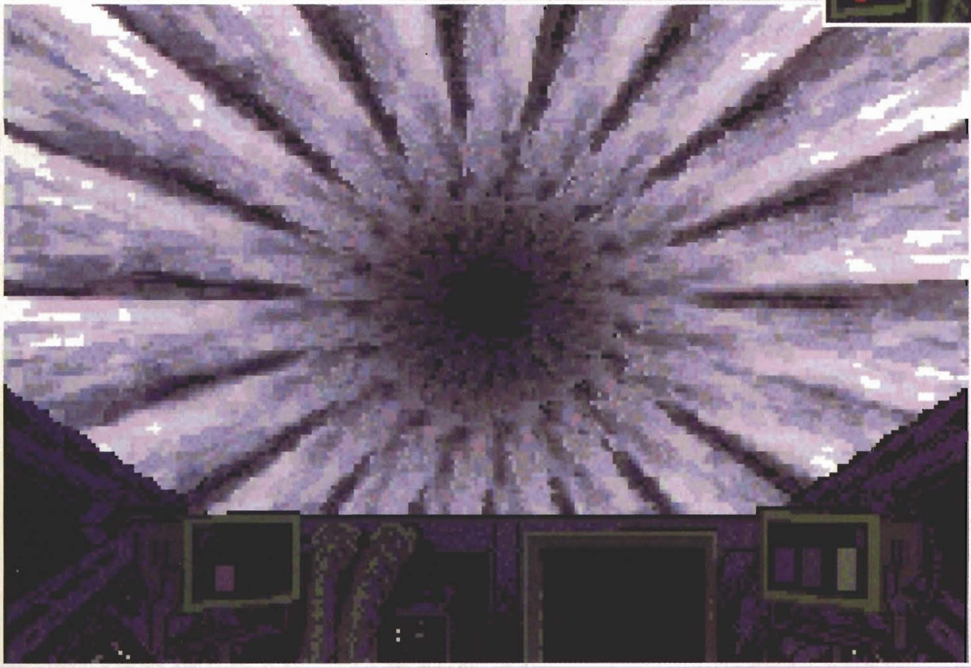
I would like to think that with the advent of the PowerPc the Amiga will take-over as the `ultimate multimedia station'. I think the future is bright for fellow Amigans.

Q What plans do you have for the future? Ideally, want sort of game would you like to write next?


If all goes according to plan the finished Star Fighter will include FMV

A I'm writing it. "Star Fighter" is the game I wanted to play when I bought Wing Commander et al. "Star Fighter 2" (if the first one is popular) will comprise full motion video for the cut-scenes, multiple story lines, Internet play – the works. I am developing some 3D sound techniques which will be added to future projects. I'm also looking into hardware projects for total-immersion experiences. I have a few designs in mind.

GeoSync Media will also move into film, music and multimedia production. I'm also a big fan of educational tools and I have an educational game in pre-production which will be dual platform (Amiga/IBM). But mainly I want to become a software project manager. I would like to work with a company with talented staff and host many game products. That's is where I'm heading.


Your Star Fighter jumping through hyperspace

ACTION FEATURE

SMELLY BLOKE

Grandpa

This month the smelly old bloke takes a look at Origin's classic Wing Commander series

You could quite easily say that the computer game industry has much in common with the pop industry – huge amounts of money are there for the taking and most of it is taken by seamlessly produced but desperately unoriginal one hit wonders. However, every now and again somebody will use a little imagination and look a things just that little bit differently. What they come up with will set the standard from then on.

Wing Commander did precisely that back in 1990 when it was released. Until then, space shoot 'em-up games obeyed a very simple formula: Pilot your little space ship along a scrolling screen blowing up little UFOs and alien ships as you go. Story lines and settings definitely took a back seat.

Wing Commander took a radically new take on the old genre. The game seemed to be a cocktail of genres and ideas. Take two parts Top Gun, one part Star Wars and one part WWII John Wayne Flying Tiger's type gung ho movie and you'd have a fair idea of the story line. You are one of the Earth's best fighter pilots confronting a threat from beyond the stars, a vicious race of aliens





called the Kilrathi. These feline-like aliens have launched an offensive against earth colonies on nearby star systems and, as the attack is beginning to threaten earth itself, you have to confront the foe.

What really made the game special was the immense care and thought that had obviously gone into it. Rather than just feel like you were undertaking unconnected and unimportant missions, each mission would have a direct effect on your career and the outcome of the war in general. On your actions would hang the future of an entire corner of the galaxy.

You wouldn't be alone in your fight. As you progressed up the ranks you'd fly with wingmen and women, some calm and collected and likely to obey your orders, others loose cannons who would disregard any orders they didn't like.

The whole game had a feeling of 'fight the good fight' about it, like one of those old black and white war movies where US navy pilots hold back the Japanese advance, no matter what. The game was enveloping and brimmed with ideas, from the little joystick on the screen that moved as you moved the controls to the fact that the Kilrathi ships had a totally different design from the Earth ships.

Wing Commander's reception was rapturous. "Stunning graphics, attention to game detail, a remarkable 3-D combat machine" said PC Magazine. "This is the way space combat should look" proclaimed Amiga Power. The game sold by the ton and achieved, some would say, the impossible by proving to be more popular than the graphically superior, George Lucas produced X-Wing .It was inevitable that an idea so fresh and original would spawn imitations and sequels.

Wing Commander junkies didn't have to wait long for their first fix. In the last seven years no less than four direct sequels to the original have come out, as well as spin offs such as Wing Commander Armada, Wing Commander Academy and the very successful Privateer series. The beauty of the story line was that each new game would be the next instalment – giving it more direction than just straight sequels.

Wing Commander II saw the hero of the original, Commander Blair posted on the distant world of Canearvon after being set up for a devastating attack on the earth forces. Fighting his way back up through



Jo







the ranks, your character has to reveal the plot against him and destroy the Kilrathi HQ threatening your corner of the galaxy. The third instalment saw you attacking the Kilrathi homeland and bringing peace to the galaxy, while in the fourth the cease fire proves to be more dangerous than the peace.

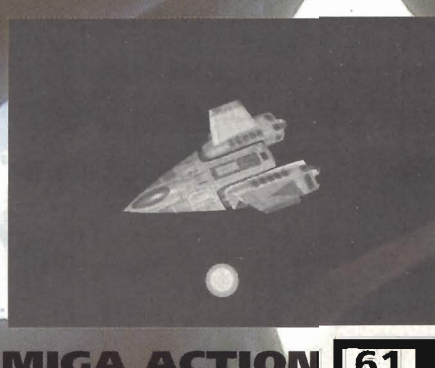
As the Wing Commander series has progressed, so the game has grown. Origin ploughed an unprecedented $8 million into Wing Commander IV and what it invested in Wing Commander V, God only knows. From the humble bit mapped beginnings, the latest Wing Commander needs a hefty Pentium to hurry along its SVGA texture mapped graphics. The PlayStation disk requires four CDs. The FMV between the fighting now features Mark Hamill, Malcom McDowell and a host of other 'proper' actors.

As yet there is no sign that the Wing Commander series is running out of steam. The game is one of Origin's flagship products and a casual search on the Internet will reveal thousands of committed (and slightly mad) fans. Wing Commander V is currently under development and, rumour has it, somewhere in Hollywood a Wing Commander movie is in the planning stages.

From its humble origins on the Amiga, through to its more recent incarnations on PlayStation and PC, Wing Commander is undoubtedly one of the most successful computer game franchises in the industry. Although at the moment only the original Wing Commander is available on the Amiga, Click BOOM's recent wish list saw WC2 and WC3 being one of the top choices for a port over to the Power Amiga so fingers crossed...







Dirty Rotten Scoundrel's Cheat Page



Well hello again! You know the drill – Dunhill in the holder, pour G&T and come and peruse my collection of cheats old and new

TEST DRIVE II

Are you as good at driving as Maureen from ' The Driving School'? Well worry not, here are a few cheats I compiled for the excellent Test Drive II. During play type any of the following:

"OUTRAN"	This will put you ahead of the other cars
"AERF"	Gives you an extra life
"GASS"	Brings you to the gas station
"BRUCE"	Changes the sign on level two
"GASST"	Get to the gas station with average time

THEME PARK

Has your business acumen deserted you? Try this cunning cheat:
Insert disk three to load the game without the intro sequence and, as the screen goes blank, press 'C' a few times. When the game has loaded, select a new game and switch onto the map screen. You should notice that your player's name has changed to "It's You, Buddy". Now when the game starts, you will have plenty of cash in your bank account.

Also, by entering different names you'll be able to access some really handy cheats. Enter "FLIGHT SIM" for the name of the park and you will start the game with 200K instead of the usual 130K or enter "DEMO" for the name of the park for a ready made one.

This game really is a bounder's paradise – there are cheats everywhere. Try this one: Position a bouncy castle anywhere in the park and pause the game until you notice the writing above the entrance speed up. Type 'L', (pause),'I', (pause), 'V', (pause), 'E', (pause), 'C', (pause), 'A', (pause), 'S', (pause), 'H', (pause), 'P', and 'P'. You should now get a new shop and ride every year.

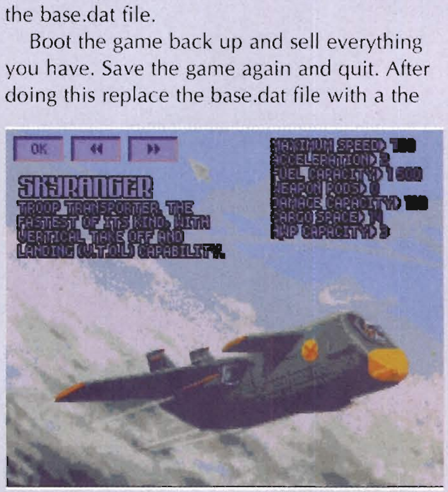
Build a fantastic roller coaster by building the smallest possible loop (using as few sections of track as possible) around the rides embarkation point. Open it up and close it down immediately (to only be charged for the tiny ride). Now remove the tiny loop and build your dream coaster free of charge.



UFO ENEMY UNKNOWN

If combating alien forces is emptying your wallet, try this little cheat. Quit playing the game for a while and building up your stores save the game. Exit the game and go into your current save game directory and make a copy of the base.dat file.

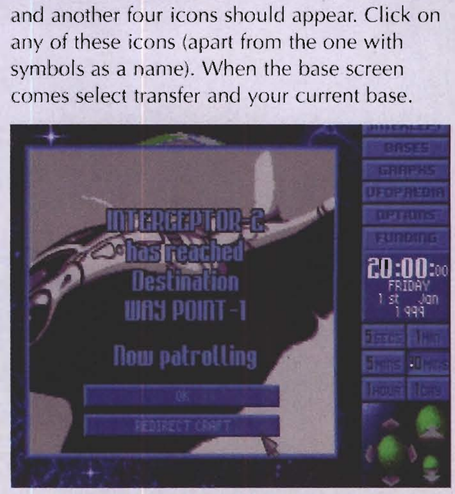
Boot the game back up and sell everything you have. Save the game again and quit. After doing this replace the base.dat file with a the copy of the original that you made earlier. When you resume the game you'll find that you'll have all the money from the sales that you made plus all the equipment you sold.



UFO ENEMY UNKNOWN, CD32 (MICROPROSE

Here are a couple of little cheats for the CD32 version of UFO. Simple one this – when you desperately need supplies to arrive, save the game and return to geoscape. Your supplies will arrive instantly.

Here's another one. Save your game and reset the machine. Load up the saved game and go to the based information screen. You will see three base icons, click to the right of these and another four icons should appear. Click on any of these icons (apart from the one with symbols as a name). When the base screen comes select transfer and your current base.



VIROCOP

Here a few level codes for this old actioner:
02"VGKJFVS"
03"JTPJMJN"
04"MDSPTSK"
05"TDTSSTF"
06"TVTSKTF"
07"RNJVJPJ"
08"DMSSMGM"
09"HBJTHLT"
10"CLVMCCG"
11"BHFFNSR"
12"CHNFGTC"
13"LBPFMFL"
14"BLKFFMB"

WING COMMANDER

Wing Commander can be a very tricky game to play, so try this little tip. Launch Wing Commander either from cli cd to the directory where WC is installed or DF0: if playing from floppy.

Type "Wing h0 Origin&tonic" and press 'RETURN'. Take care to type it exactly as shown – the cheat won't work if even the case is wrong. During play hold down 'SHIFT' and press 'F5' to destroy any marauding Kilrathi.





WORMS (TEAM 17)

Those jokers at Team 17 always include loads of special hidden cheat modes in their games, try these for Worms. On the title screen, Type in "TOTAL WORMAGE" for Sheep Mode. If you are using a joypad press green, up, pause, pause, yellow. This should give you three sheep, one banana bomb and a mini gun straight away.

Improve your wormy martial prowess by learning the legendary 'prod move'. Get next to your victim and press away, away, towards, towards (in other words, if your worm is facing right press left, left, right, right). The secret move your worm uses will take your breath away.

There's quite a lot of fun to be had in the secret custom level option. Gravity, friction, sky and water colours can all be chopped and changed about to suit you. Instead of saving your level as FISHCAKE.WRM, save it as FISHCAKE.????.WRM (the four question marks being four numbers).

The first number sets gravity; one being very low and five very high. The second number controls friction. Again this can be set between one and five (one very low, five very high). The third and forth numbers are the sky and water colours and can be between one and nine.

LEVEL CODES:

"1803921718"	Weird scrap yard level
"3549908729"	Jungle level w/ crashed heli on island
"252101829"	A perfectly curved island
"345076839"	Bridge over troubled island
"1706205299"	Arctic caves
"THORAHIRD"	Explore her hidden depths

ANIMAL LEVELS:

"954338916"	Sneezing alien elephant
"2810298544"	Horse sticking head out of water
"3376459905"	A bit of a tricera

XENON II

Bored with certain levels? Just pause the game and type "RUSSIAN AIR", then unpause the game. Pressing 'N' will now skip levels. This doesn't work on all versions.

Tips

Try to stick with your best weapon, and end up with two Cannons, two Lasers, and either Side Shot or Rear Shot. Always spend your money as you cannot take leftover cash.

Monsters

SNAIL	Shoot at eye, avoid mines.
ALIEN	Shoot eyes at either side at top. Scroll back and shoot centre eye.
SPIDER	Destroy as much web as possible. Fly down to face spider and fire continuously.
CRAYFISH	Travels in figure eight. Stay below and fire in its face.
SNAKE	Attacks from left of screen.
DRAGON	Shoot the side heads first, then tail, then main head.
HEAD	Shoot both eyes, avoiding laser fire and extending tongue. Shoot at head when tongue goes in.
TANK	Use missiles
GRAND SPACESHIP	Shoot all cannons until totally destroyed.

XTREME RACING

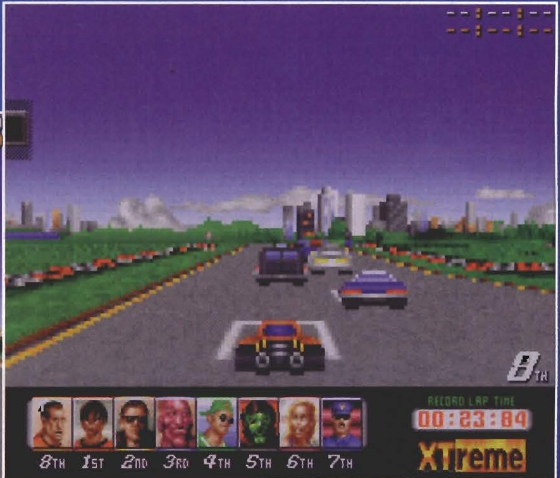
And now for a few little cheats for Xtreme Racing, the multi-player race game. On the first selection screen type any of the following:

"SHEEPY SHEEPY"	Ride a sheep (oo-er!)
"IDKFA"	For auto qualify (and access to three bonus tracks in single track mode)

Hints

Grassland One has a short cut – where you have the blocks in the middle of the road. Go just past there and you can drive through a tree.





ACTION TIPS

SOLUTION

Big Red Adventure

Hugh Poynton talks you through the fiendishly difficult Big Red Adventure

Seeing as Big Red Adventure has just been released on the Amiga, it won't be long until people start head butting the monitor out of sheer frustration. To keep you cool and to save you having to buy another monitor, Amiga Action has decided to guide you through this tricky puzzler.

Hotel Room

Relaxing in his comfortable Moscow hotel room, Doug examines photographs he took on his tour of the Kremlin museum. His criminal brain is working on a fiendish plan to steal the Tsar's crown. Using your inventory, open the envelope to discover the photographs from the museum. They have been developed as follows:

Picture 1: The crown picture shows the locations of the scanners
Picture 2: Museum security at front door
Picture 3: Museum roof and trapdoor
Picture 4: Same gallery, but includes one of the cameras
Picture 5: Miss Glasnost 1993 at a fashion show in Red Square

Examine each photo carefully. Pick up the suitcase using your inventory options and examine the contents. Here you will find a tape recorder and a tape measure for use later in the game.

Now move over to the desk with the TV set on it and pick up the camera and then the remote control, using it to turn on the TV. You will now be watching the end of the Matrioska Show. The show's presenter, Stroganoff, will tell you how to enter the show. He puts up an open invite to meet him at The Russian Doll Show.

To play, you need only send the ticket from New Pravda, the local TV guide. Before moving out of your room and into the foyer, pick up the TV aerial and add it to your inventory. Now exit to the hotel foyer.

The Foyer

In the hotel foyer you will find a rope that serves as a handrail on the staircase. Pick it up and then go to the porter and give him your keys – then leave the hotel.



Once outside go to the newsagents. Look at and buy, all the magazines. If you run out of cash, just wiggle the TV aerial around in the coin slot and hey presto, you'll get another $4 a time.

Inside New Pravda you'll find the following questions:

1. How many Rs are there on the label of Dostoyevsk Caviar, the Muscovite's favourite?
2. What is the height, in cans



Doug gets a tour of the Kremlin



Doug goes shopping...



...and then off to lunch



mmm sounds nice, i am spoilt for choice!

of vodkacola, of the statue of Karl Marx which stands in Red Square?

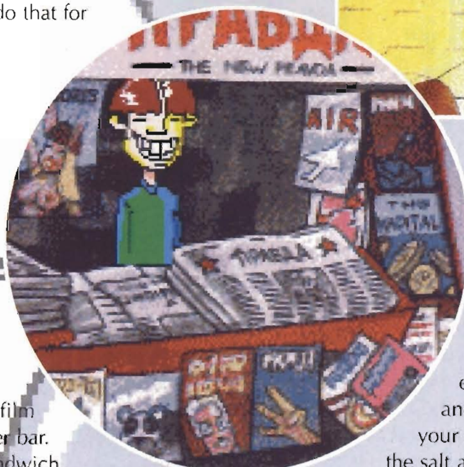
3. What is the weight of the Great Bear, the bear meat hamburger produced by the Burger Tsar Fast Food Chain?

Answering these questions will take some lateral thinking – luckily, we can do that for you!

Red Square

Walk to Red Square. You should find a large statue in the centre of the square – click just to the right of the base of the statue. This takes you across to the burger joint McRomanov. Once there, go to the bottom right corner to examine the old red car and find a broken camera.

Take the broken camera and examine it to find a brand new film and then walk over to the burger bar. Buy a vodkacola and then a sandwich.



When asked: Maxi or Gigantic, go for Gigantic, then go for the great bear burger. Don't eat your burger and don't drink your cola, just take the salt and the bread from the counter before walking back over to Red Square.



The grand foyer of the Hotel Mosow

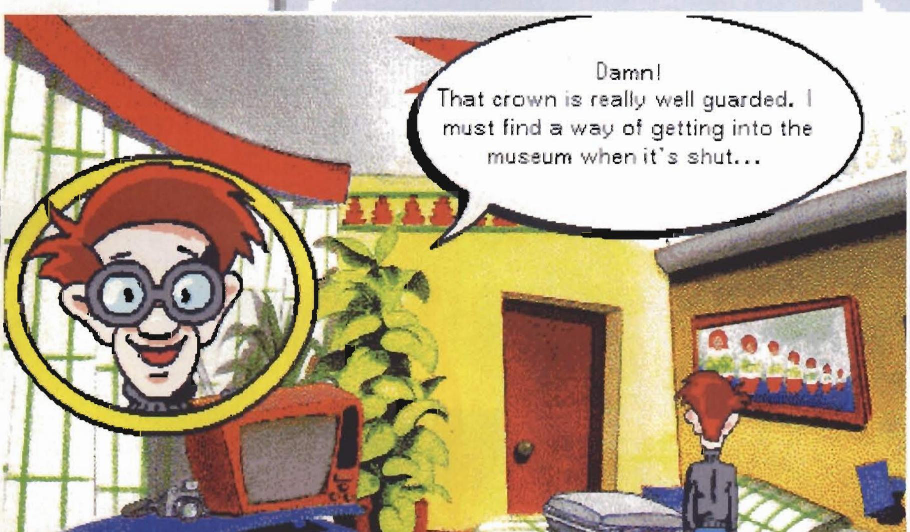
Next, wander about chatting to people, you'll pick up some valuable information. Head straight to the first man in the queue for the GUM store. Talk to a big hairy bloke who tells you that the queue is for razor blades that have just come into stock after months.

After finishing that conversation go to the Japanese tourist, standing in the middle of the square. Talk to the tourist and give him your camera so he can take a picture of you with the statue in the background.

Unfortunately the photographer is a bit of a spanner, so you'll have to get him to take quite a few pictures. After the third bad picture, your film runs out. Ask to borrow one from the tourist, before selecting the spare film until you manage to reload it. The fourth photo is correct, showing Doug beside the statue about half its size. This will help to work out how high the statue is in cans of Vodkacola.

Examine the photo then measure the can of cola with the tape measure you found in the case. To do this, select the can and keep doing so until Doug works out what to do. The can is 12cm tall, Doug is 168cm tall, and the statue is twice his height, so the statue is the height of 28 cans of vodkacola. This answers Question two on the free ticket.

In order to answer Question three, go back to the scales to the left of the newsagents. On arrival, weigh yourself and then eat the burger and weigh yourself again. The difference gives you the weight of the burger. You will find that Doug has put on seven pounds, so the weight of the burger is seven pounds. More next month...



Time for a cunning plan...

The Domain

Hugh Poynton takes a look at The Domain, a new PD dedicated Amiga games magazine

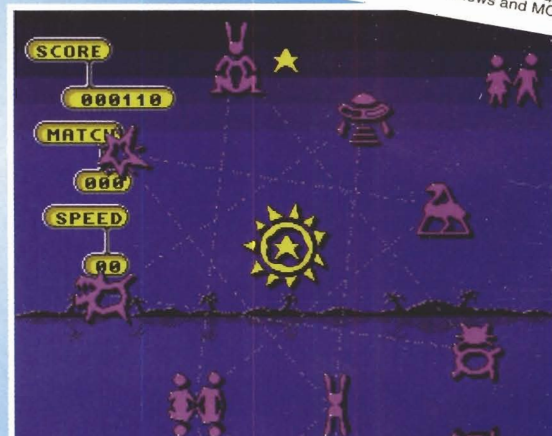


As we all know, a couple of years ago the big software houses started to lose interest in the Amiga. The PC was becoming the norm and with the advent of high spec 486 and then Pentium machines, games quite simply looked smoother and sexier on a PC.

Amiga games magazines have suffered the same fate – slowly and inexorably, readership has leeched from every major Amiga publication. Amiga Shopper closed a few months ago, followed by Amiga User International. Just as the Amiga community started developing its own 'grass roots' hardware and software solutions to those problems that no games manufacturer or hardware retailer could afford or be bothered with, so too have magazines started to emerge for the still sizeable number of Amiga users.

Although not of the same quality as professionally produced publications, these magazines are written by those with expert knowledge and a passionate interest in the subject. Admittedly, most of these 'fanzines' are boring and unoriginal, which is why when one comes along that is actually interesting and readable you sit up and take note.

The inspiration for The Domain came about a couple of years ago when things started to look bad for the Amiga. "In the past two years or so, when our beloved Amiga was at a low point, the only thing keeping it alive was the committed user base and, of course, the PD scene. With the Aminet thriving and more and more 'home made' games becoming available, Robert Iveson decided that there was definitely a niche for a PD games magazine.



Sun is just one of the PD games featured in the Domain

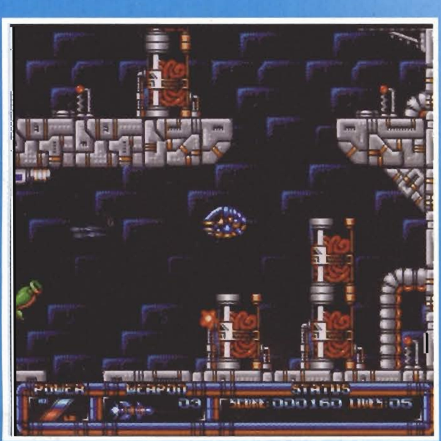
Starting off with an 020 A1200, a copy of PageStream 2.2UK and a Canon bubble jet printer, Robert set to work on issue one of The Domain. Backed by a number of Public Domain libraries, Robert launched the first magazine in the Spring of this year.

With issue one sold out and issue two selling just as well, Robert has been pleasantly surprised by the success of the magazine, "Initially, I was quite surprised at such great feedback" he says, "I have received letters of praise and requests for further issues". Robert is very optimistic about the future of the PD scene, especially with the development of the PowerPC Amiga.



"The PD scene will always bloom. It's great to see so many people produce such quality programs for our machine. There will always be coders out there who'll take advantage of the higher spec systems, it's people like this that need to see the Amiga better the PC. And with the dawn of the PowerPC then things can only get better."

If you're interested in getting hold of a copy of The Domain, contact Robert either by snail mail (41 Welstone Garth, Swinnow, Leeds) or on e-mail him at thedomain@enterprise.net



Games like Aquanaut show the high quality of some modern PD games

REASONS TO BE CHEERFUL

In these 'interesting' times for the Amiga computer, HiSoft would like to express its total commitment to the Amiga and its users. And what better way than offering you the best software and hardware products at unbeatable prices!

Squirrel CD-ROM

The Classic Squirrel and the Surf Squirrel have revolutionised the way you use your A1200 and A600 computers, making it possible to add up to 7 SCSI devices such as hard drives, scanners, Zip drives, CD-ROMs etc. With SCSI you get a complete, easy-to-fit and easy-to-use system that is fast, reliable and expandable. And now it's even more affordable than ever!

As the developers of the famous Squirrel SCSI interfaces we have been able to shave margins to the bone and bring some unbeatable CD-ROM deals. Just look at what you get in each of our great Squirrel CD-ROM packs:



- ✔ Choice of internal or external CD-ROM drive.
- ✔ Choice of 2-speed, 4-speed or 12-speed drives.
- ✔ Choice of Classic Squirrel or Surf Squirrel interfaces.
- ✔ Choice of 3 FREE CD titles to get you started.
- ✔ Power lead and cables where appropriate.
- ✔ Full manuals on how to set up and use your new equipment.
- ✔ Extensive after-sales support, direct from HiSoft.

All you have to do is pick up the phone and call our friendly sales staff, free of charge - we will advise you on the best choice for your system and put together the best Squirrel CD-ROM pack you can buy.

Squirrel CD2X *(Classic Squirrel, 2-speed External CD-ROM, choice of 3 FREE CDs*)*	£99.95
Squirrel CD4X *(as CD2X but with fast quad-speed CD-ROM)*	£149.95
Squirrel CD12X *(as CD2X but with ultra-fast 12-speed CD-ROM)*	£239.95
Surf Squirrel Option *(faster SCSI plus ultra-fast serial interface)*	+£30.00
Internal Option *(for fitting in tower case or your own case)*	-£35.00

*Current CD titles include AGA Experience 2, Global Amiga Experience, Grandslam Gamer Gold, Sweet Touch, Women of the Web & The Kara Collection

£99.95 — **2-Speed CD-ROM Classic Squirrel 3 CD Titles**

Squirrel ZIP

The revolutionary Zip drive from Iomega is one of the major technological developments of the 90s, and it works perfectly on your Amiga with HiSoft's tailor-made Squirrel Zip kit.



SQUIRREL ZIP100 PACK

The complete Zip100 pack for any SCSI-aware Amiga computer:

- ✔ Zip Drive including 1 cartridge with PC/Mac Zip Tools, 25-way to 25-way SCSI lead, manuals etc.
- ✔ HiSoft Amiga Zip Tools software with Amiga-specific user manual.
- ✔ Special 25-way to 50-way converter for use with Squirrel SCSI or other SCSI peripherals.

£149.95 for existing SCSI - **£189.95** with Classic Squirrel

bjc 4200 CANON

This amazing-value printer allows truly stunning photo-realistic quality, *with no banding*, when used with the Canon Studio software package.

This pack includes printer, Amiga printer lead, Canon Studio and *free* photo-realistic cartridge offer.

£249.95

Goodies GALORE

Cinema4D CD Edition	£199.99
The Whippet	£49.95
Megalosound	£29.95
Clarity 16 Sampler	£99.95
ProMIDI Interface	£24.95
Media MAGIC	£39.95
Maxon MAGIC	£19.95
Disk MAGIC 2	£29.95
Twist 2 database	£69.95
Termite Comms	£19.95
TermiteTCP	£29.95
IBrowse 1.11	£29.95
Net&Web 1	£29.95
Net&Web 2	£59.95
Web Explosion CD	£44.95
Personal Paint 7.1 CD	£24.95
Devpac 3 Assembler	£49.95
HighSpeed Pascal	£69.95
Studio 2	£44.95
ProFlight	£19.95
SMD-100 & 4 VideoCDs	£169.95

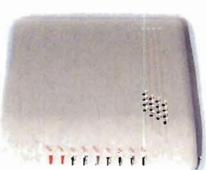
Enterprise NET&WEB

Confused by all the hype about the internet? We're not surprised. But here is the no-nonsense, quickstart pack that contains all you need to connect, to send and receive email, to transfer files, to access those essential newsgroups and to browse the world wide web. The brand-new Enterprise Net&Web pack is a breeze to install and a joy to use - here's what you get:

ENTERPRISE NET&WEB PACK

- ✔ 33.6bps Fax/Voice Modem - cream
- ✔ Modem & telephone leads
- ✔ Easy install program
- ✔ Free 30-day trial account with Demon Internet
- ✔ Net&Web Software
  - *FTP file transfer*
  - *HiSoft Mail email*
  - *IBrowse browser*
  - *Usenet newsreader*

£99.95



ENTERPRISE NET&WEB+ PACK

Everything in the Enterprise Net&Web Pack (see left) *plus*

- ✔ *TermiteTCP* software that supports ppp for connection to any service provider.
- ✔ *Amiga Surfin' Book*, full of invaluable info on the internet.

£129.95

HiSOFT SYSTEMS

The Old School, Greenfield, Bedford MK45 5DE, UK
tel +44 (0) 1525 718181 • fax +44 (0) 1525 713716
www.hisoft.co.uk • www.cinema4d.com

TO ORDER CALL 0500 223 660

Call free (within the UK) to order any HiSoft product, using your credit/debit card. We accept Mastercard, Visa, Switch, Delta, American Express etc. at no extra charge. Carriage is £3 for software, £4 for hardware (2-3 day service) or £6 for guaranteed next day delivery (for goods in stock). All prices include UK VAT. Call, fax or email us for export prices. We also accept cheques, POs and official purchase orders.